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MY HERESY

MY HERESY

The Autobiography of An Idea

by

WILLIAM MONTGOMERY BROWN, D.D.

SOMETIME BISHOP OF ARKANSAS IN THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH: NOW BISHOP OF THE OLD CATHOLIC CHURCH

And ye shall know the truth
and the truth shall make you free
JOHN VIII: 32

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B881

TO THE CRUCIFIED SON OF MAN
I HUMBLY DEDICATE
THIS BOOK
REGARDLESS OF HIS RACE, COLOR OR CREED

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

WILLIAM MONTGOMERY BROWN WAS BORN ON an Ohio farm, September 4, 1855. He was a Civil War orphan, "bound out" when less than seven years of age, to a German farmer, for whom he worked until he was sixteen, when he was removed from the farm by the county authorities and taken into the home of Mr. Jacob Gardner. Here he remained until he was 21, when he went to Omaha and began his struggle to get an education.

At 25, he came under the influence of Mrs. Mary Scranton Bradford, of Cleveland, a wealthy philanthropist, whose niece and adopted daughter, Miss Ella Bradford, he married.

He chose missionary work as his career, beginning at Galion, Ohio, his present home. He was soon appointed Archdeacon of Ohio; later he was ordained a bishop and elected to the See of Arkansas.

While Bishop of Arkansas he published two controversial books, *The Crucial Race Question* and *A Level Plan for Church Union*, but it was not until after his retirement in 1912, that he came to hold the views which led to his world-famous trial for heresy.

His transformation was sudden and dramatic. Through the study of Darwin, then of Marx, the most orthodox bishop in America became, almost over-night, the world's most extreme heretic. A verdict of guilty was sustained against him, and a decree of deposition was eventually read by the Presiding Bishop of the Church. Bishop Brown, although deposed, retained his full Episcopal standing, through his ordination, while under fire, as Bishop of the Old Catholic Church.

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PREFACE

I wrote this book. I did not write it. I am its sole author. I am not its sole author. It is entirely original with me: well, not entirely, but partly—about as much, perhaps, as any book is original with its author.

When I come to think of it, however, I realize that no book is original. No book was ever written by one person. Writing is a social act. It takes all the people there are, and all the people there ever were, to get anything written.

A man may imagine that his words originated with him: but the chances are, if he looks in the dictionary he will find them all there. He will find that not a single word was original. The only thing for which he can claim originality is in the way he twists them into some unfamiliar and seemingly new pattern.

But it is well not to examine that pattern too closely, if one is concerned with retaining the glow of original authorship. For at best, each combination of words only represents a certain way of looking at things; and one may be greatly chagrined to discover that many, many people, whom he has never heard of, have looked at these same things in almost the same way.

Books, nevertheless, are original. There was a time when they did not exist, and they must have

come into existence somehow. So far as we have been able to discover, moreover, they have never been written by insects or birds or fishes. Literature seems to be a phenomenon associated only with human life: so it would seem scientifically sound to say that men write books.

Men write books, but no individual man writes an individual book. One person, in fact, could write nothing. If there were only one person in the human species, there would be no words; for words are the result of contacts between mind and mind.

There would not be even spoken words; for the hearer has as much to do with the creation of words as the speaker. If there were no ears, there would be no noise. If there were no eyes, there would be no light.

Incidentally, with only one person in the human species, even though he were immortal and had an eternity in which to educate himself, he could not write; for he would have not only nothing to write, but nothing to write with. He would have no typewriter, nor pen, nor even a chisel with which to fashion symbols on the stones. These things are all social products. It took millions of years of contact between man and man to bring them into existence.

Ideas, like typewriters, do not emanate from any individual mind. There is no such thing, in fact, as an individual mind; for mind is simply the name of the phenomenon which results from human relations; not merely the relations of living persons with living persons, but our relations, through books and through a hundred other channels, with the lives of those who have lived in the past.

This, by the way, is not an original idea. Every

living person sees it more or less clearly. The clearness with which I see it seems due in large measure to Mr. Walter N. Polakov and Count Alfred Korzybski; but I am quite sure that the idea did not originate with them. In fact, I found it difficult to understand Count Korzybski; and I am very sure that he would not authorize me to express any idea of his. Nevertheless, in the long talks I had with him, a new point of view seemed to germinate in me. Where and how he got his ideas I can not say, but I imagine it was through some very similar process.

People who superficially followed my so-called trial for heresy may have imagined that I denied the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. That is not the case. The fact is that I affirmed the inspiration of all Scriptures. All writing is inspired. All thinking is inspired. All ideas are inspired. None of these things could possibly emanate from an individual, any more than Jehovah could create a universe out of nothing.

It takes everything to create anything. It takes everybody, even, to write such a simple book as this.

That is equivalent, of course, to saying that God wrote it—God, the All-in-All of Existence, through Christ, or the human manifestation of this Universal Reality.

I maintain that this view is perfectly orthodox. If God created the universe, he must have been the author of this book; for whatever charges the theologians may bring against it, none of them will claim that the book is not in the universe now.

The Christian version of the great drama of God and Man puts this thought beautifully. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name," said the Christ, "there am I in the midst of them." Where

there is only one, apparently, or where there is any emphasis whatever upon the idea of *self,* there is no room for Christ. God simply can not be there, unless there are at least two or three; for human life is social, and he who even tries to live it unto himself is simply not alive.

That thought, also, is not original. It came to me while I was talking with my friend, Charles W. Wood, but Mr. Wood denied that it was original with him. He said he got it from a Protestant Episcopal clergyman in New York. Unfortunately, Mr. Wood has forgotten the man's name and so he can not be given credit here, excepting as a member of the anonymous millions whose social efforts eventually issued in the writing of this Preface.

Mr. Wood, I should explain, was engaged on this particular occasion in proving to me that *he* did not write this book. He admitted that he probably had something to do with it, along with all the other millions of the quick and the dead.

Time was when I would have said that some of the phrasing was distinctly his, some of the phrases, in fact, which I liked best of all.

"Those words seem to fit you pretty well?" he asked.

"Exactly," I said.

"Better than the others?"

"Unquestionably," I had to admit.

"Then why not wear them?" he queried, and I was at a loss to know what to say. The words, he said, did not belong to him. He had found most of them, at least, in the dictionary. As for the patterns into which they had been arranged, they had been

shaped, he said, not by him but by the things which had happened.

Mr. Wood attended both of my so-called trials, and he was possibly the most amused of all the spectators at the comedy in New Orleans. The events in this narrative to which he was not a personal witness he has heard me narrate possibly a hundred times.

Strangely, he never seemed to be bored. He would just sit there, eager, seldom saying a word, while I talked on and on to newspaper interviewers or to other new-found friends who were curious about some phase of my career; and he never seemed to tire of the story.

"But you ought to tell it all in one piece," he frequently suggested. "The more you put it together, the louder and funnier it becomes."

Events seem to have justified his statement. The story, for the first time, is all together here. How it came together is still a considerable mystery, both to me and to Mr. Wood. He says he heard me tell it, and that he held strictly to my words throughout. But if you were to ask him what he means by the word "my," he would doubtless give you an enlightening discourse on the communistic character of human life.

Nevertheless, in so far as there is a *me,* this is *my* story.

MY HERESY

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I

GENESIS AND A REVELATION

This is not the story of a man with a new idea. It is a story, rather, of a new idea with a man. The man did not do much with the idea, but the idea did a lot of things with him. Incidentally, it made his name known throughout the world. Nevertheless, it is my honest opinion that it did not puff him up. It is with no conscious sense of self-importance, at least, that he writes these words. He may talk in the first person. He may weary the reader by saying "I did this" and "I did that." But he, at least, will understand throughout that he really did not do anything. At any rate, he feels ever so much more humble to-day than when, as Bishop of the See of Arkansas, he used to summon his subordinates before him and announce his momentous decisions on matters of no consequence whatever.

This is not an autobiography. Perhaps, before I have finished my testimony, the reader will feel some personal acquaintance with Bill Brown, the illiterate and gawky farmhand, with Will Brown, the half-baked theological student, with the Reverend William M. Brown, the ambitious and hustling young advocate of the Church for Americans, and with the august Right Reverend William Montgomery Brown, D.D., who resigned his diocese

because of broken health, and lost an opportunity to attain honorable oblivion by getting well again and reading some books by Charles Darwin while he was recuperating. My purpose, however, is not to talk about these persons. My purpose is to evoke some picture of the world in which this Brown phenomenon thought he was living and of the world in which he later on actually found himself.

Bill Brown, the farm boy, as I remember him, was not troubled much by ideas. He was too busy. He had to get up long before daylight and work, and work, and work. Why he had to work he did not stop to figure out. All he knew was that he was poor, and the difference to him between rich and poor was that the poor had to work. He did not go to school; but if he had gone to school I doubt that he would have discovered any other essential difference.

He had a few memories and a few hazy notions of what life was all about. Once he had had a father, who worked to support him and his mother, and in those days things had not been so bad. But there had been a war between the South and the North, and the Government had ordered Father to go and fight in the war. Father did not want to go, but he had to, for Father was poor. When the Government ordered a rich man to go to war, in those days, the rich man paid the Government some money and stayed home. But when the Government ordered a poor man to go to war, he went.

Just what the Government was, Bill Brown could not have told. He had not studied that. He did not have time. There were too many cows to milk and hogs to feed and weeds to pull and potato bugs

to pick. But the Government had sent Father to the war and Father had lost his life. There was only Mother left, and she was so sick and helpless that she had to bind Bill out, when he was only six and a half years old, to the old farmer for whom he was now working; and for whom he had been working, it seemed, just about all his life.

There were other forces in Bill's life, as he saw it, which were even more vague than the Government. One of them was God. God loved the poor, but for some reason or other he did not treat them any better than the Government did.

God knew everything, and he knew Bill from A to Z. In this, he had a great advantage over Bill; and although Bill understood, theoretically, that God was kind and good, Bill was still very much afraid of him.

When Bill had any direct dealings with God, he never seemed to get very far. This was all Bill's fault, he knew, and he never once blamed God, but it seemed that he could never talk with God without losing his self-respect. He always felt that he owed God something—something which he was never quite ready to pay—and the feeling made him uneasy. At times he tried to remember that Jesus had paid it; but then the feeling that he hadn't done anything for Jesus made him feel about as uneasy as before.

Once, when he was terribly sick, he made God a promise. He promised that if God would let him get well, he would devote his life to God's service. God's service, of course, meant the Methodist ministry. But when Bill got well, somehow, he did not begin to preach. He did not know how. He

did not even know how to learn, so he just let the matter slide; but the memory of this additional debt frequently bobbed up to torture him, especially when he was sick.

When he was able to work it was not so bad. When he was able to work there were just ordinary, every-day aches and pains to occupy his mind, and he felt that his dealings with God could be postponed. If he postponed them too long, to be sure, he would go to hell. But hell, frightful as it was, did not seem to trouble him much when his back was aching from hilling corn or his fingers were being nipped by the frost while he was helping in the woodlot. Only when he was sick, or on particularly long-drawn-out Sabbaths, did he worry much about hell.

Bill had no religious doubts; at least, none that were recognized as such. It never occurred to his conscious mind that there might not be any hell. Nevertheless, as he stands in my memory now, I can hardly classify him as an ardent believer. His belief in hell was not like some of his other beliefs. It was not, for instance, like his belief in horses and cows and weeds and potato bugs. It was not a belief which he lived by every day, but a sort of sacred thing, rather unrelated to the daily humdrum of existence, which came to him in force only when his mind happened to be arrested by some suggestion of death.

Bill wanted to live. He shrank from every thought of extinction. Life was not much fun, and he could not have told why he preferred life to death; but, with all its hardships, he wanted life. He had few definite plans. He could not read very well and he

knew nothing of the world beyond the range of his own personal contacts. But he always hoped, in some vague way, to make his fortune in that world. To be sure, he "believed" that God ran that world, and that He knew ahead of time all that was ever going to happen to everybody, but this belief did not figure extensively in making up Bill's attitude toward life. He managed not to become a particularly bad boy. He committed none of the major crimes. Nevertheless, he did not devote himself intelligently to currying favor with God but went on hoping, in spite of his beliefs, that Luck would be kind to him instead.

Well, God or Luck or something was kind to him. Within a few years, through a series of circumstances in which Bill himself seemed to play no active part whatever, this illiterate young clod-hopper was basking in luxury, and being initiated into the world of education and culture under the personal ministrations of a Fairy Godmother, who was also a devout Christian and an intimate friend of God.

At sixteen, Bill was taken away from the farm by the county authorities, upon the complaint of neighbors that he was not being cared for properly. The farmer for whom he worked was a sincere Christian, of the Dunkard faith, and he had done his full duty, as he saw it, by the boy. He had kept him at work and out of mischief and had not overfed him or pampered him in any way. He had told him from time to time just how God wanted people to act, and he had punished the boy conscientiously whenever he needed it. He had not sent him to school to learn a lot of things that did not concern his soul's salvation, but in all important

matters he had been very diligent. Nevertheless, the secular authorities took Bill away from him, and the boy rode away with the county officer wondering to himself what it was all about.

He was not excited. He had no thrill of adventure. He was just tired and wanted to lie down. He was on his way, he guessed, to the Poor House, but the thought did not trouble him.

What to do with him was a problem, but Bill did not bother his head to solve it. It was a problem somewhat similar, in a way, to the problem which later came before the House of Bishops. What to do with him was not *his* problem: it was a problem for the authorities. All he had to do was to *be* the problem and let the authorities do the figuring.

A boy of sixteen, in those parts, especially if he understood farm work, had a certain economic value. The trustee who had Bill in charge may have thought of this. At any rate, he took him to his own home first, to consider what should be done with him, and while he was there Bill came down with typhoid fever. He was treated well, and he eventually became convalescent, but his economic value was greatly impaired; and as soon as he was able to stand another ride, he was taken to the home of another trustee, Mr. Jacob Gardner, for consultation.

It was Mrs. Rachel Gardner who solved the problem, and not upon an economic basis. Bill was altogether too sick and too dull at the time to be looked upon as an asset in any household, but Mrs. Gardner looked upon him with motherly sympathy.

"What is your name?" she asked.

"Bill," he said.

"Bill what?"

"Bill Brown."

"Goodness!" she cried. "Why, Willie Brown, do you know that you were born in this very house? Well! Well! Well! You are not going to leave it. You are going to stay right here."

She even remembered the day of my birth, she said. There was a calf, she remembered, which had been born the same day, and there couldn't be any mistake. It was November 6, 1855. With this ample corroboration, since I had no idea when my birthday was, I noted the date. It appeared later in the record of my ordination to the ministry and my consecration to the episcopacy, for which I feel that I must now apologize. It was the calf which was born on that date, not William Montgomery Brown; for in after years I discovered Mother's Family Bible, in which my birthday was clearly set down as September 4.

I have never considered this incident important, and the fact that there was a chronological error in the records of my ordination did not seem to me to cast any shadow upon the validity of those orders. "Once a bishop, always a bishop" was the tradition of my Church, and in spite of this bit of boyhood misinformation I considered myself a bishop for all time and all eternity.

Nevertheless, on October 11, 1925, I was formally "deposed," during the progress of the Protestant Episcopal Convention in New Orleans. No explanation of how this could happen was ever given to me, but perhaps some brief may yet be drawn up upon the data which I have now, for the first time, publicly presented. Since the records were

erroneous, perhaps the orders were not indelible. If so, however, the bishops should explain that it was the calf, not William Montgomery Brown, whom they deposed at New Orleans.

II

I FALL IN LOVE: ALSO INTO EDUCATION AND SALVATION

At sixteen, I had my first opportunity to get an education. I did not make the most of it.

I longed for an education, much in the same way that I had once longed for salvation; but I did not want, in either case, to pay the price demanded. I was not afraid of the work involved, nor was I afraid of the privation, for labor and poverty were second nature to me then. But I could not stand the humiliation demanded in both ordeals.

In order to get myself saved, it seemed, I had to play the part of a debtor who could not pay his debts: I had to lose my self-respect and beg my Great Creditor for mercy.

And in order to get myself educated, I now learned, I who had reached the dignified age of sixteen would have to go into the country school with a lot of little children.

I simply could not do it. I did not justify this hardening of my neck, nor do I justify it now, but the fact remains that, with nothing to be proud of, I was nevertheless too proud to become either educated or saved on the terms stipulated.

I was not legally adopted by the Gardners, but in every real sense I became a member of the family. Not only were Mr. and Mrs. Gardner all that par-

ents could be, but the Gardner boys and the Gardner girls became real brothers and sisters.

There was only this gulf between us, that they were educated and I was not. They seemed to make nothing of the disparity, but I felt it keenly. Some time, in some way, I vowed, I would overcome this handicap. When I became twenty-one—oh, there were no end of things which I intended to do when I became twenty-one.

That figure 21 fairly haunted me. Until then, I felt, that old German ogre might somehow get his hands on me again; for had I not been legally bound to him until that age? To be sure, I was under the protection of the Gardners now, and felt reasonably safe; but I could not think of acting much on my own initiative until I was twenty-one. So I worked on the Gardner farm in the summers; and one of the Gardner boys had a sawmill in a neighboring village, and I worked there in the winters.

My then foster parents were Methodists, and they were so kind and sympathetic, as compared with the rigorous old German for whom I had slaved in childhood, that I wanted to become a Methodist too. But I could not make the grade. I announced my willingness to flee from the wrath to come, and was taken into the Church on probation, but that was as far as I could get. The Witness of the Spirit was utterly lacking. There was not the suggestion of a religious thrill. I was about the same person, so far as I could see, that I had always been. There was some trick about getting converted which I could not get on to; but a plan did occur to me by which I thought I might get an education.

That was to get it in some far distant place. In a big city where nobody knew me, I reasoned, I might be able to stand it to go to school with children. So I went to Omaha, Nebraska, which was a big city to me, just after I became twenty-one.

Before I went, however, I took what steps I could to conserve the slight religious progress I had already made. I still wanted to become a Christian, if it were psychologically possible, and I did not want to have to go through all the preliminaries again. So I went to the Methodist pastor, placed the whole matter before him, and asked if it were possible, in spite of my lack of any religious experience, for me to be transferred by letter to the Methodist Church in Omaha.

It was a knotty problem, and apparently a new one. The elder prayed for guidance and took a second chew of tobacco before he gave his answer. Whether it was the prayer or the plug that moved him, I do not know, but I received my letter.

So I became a Methodist. And since the Episcopalians, when they later took me in, never asked me to renounce my Methodism, it is my contention that I am a Methodist still. I am now a Methodist, an Episcopalian and an Old Catholic. To assume that I can not be all three is to assume that these churches are competitive and mutually exclusive clubs; and such an assumption, I think, is no longer tenable. John Wesley himself lived and died in the Church of England; and Jesus, according to the New Testament, not to mention Peter, the first Bishop of Rome, lived and died in the Jewish faith.

I did not make much progress in Methodism in

Omaha, but I held my own. I did not backslide perceptibly; and with the determination to rid myself of my educational handicaps, I kept myself rather too busy to sin.

Everybody's hand, it seemed, was out to help me. I obtained a job as a coachman in the family of Judge Clinton Briggs, and the judge took a personal interest in my advancement. Teachers gave me their personal attention, and passed me on rapidly from class to class. In addition to my public-school work, I took a course in a business school. In five years, although I had started in the fourth grade of the elementary school, I considered myself fit to return to my foster-parents and to make preparations for entering college.

Mount Union College, Ohio, was selected. It was a Methodist institution from which the Gardner boys and girls had been graduated. Of course, I intended to work my way through.

The only trouble with this plan was that there was no work. It was a small village and coachmen were not in demand. I found a place to saw wood, tend fires and do other such work for my board and room, but that was all. There was no money in sight, not even for tuition. Somebody, I think, must have given the Gardners a hint of this; for John Gardner, who had been all that a brother could possibly be to me, came to Mount Union to investigate. He made it plain to me that I could not go on like that. Then he told me of a woman in Cleveland who had helped a number of students there to find ways of putting themselves through college. She was a very fine Christian woman, I gathered, although for some strange reason she was not a Methodist.

Comes now the Fairy Godmother into my life. Her name was Mrs. Mary Scranton Bradford. She was wealthy, cultured and very religious. She was an Episcopalian. Episcopalians had been rather vague figures in my mind until then; but from the moment I met Mrs. Bradford I realized that Episcopalians were most extraordinary folk.

Mrs. Bradford was distinguished; and I soon learned to associate Episcopalianism with distinctiveness. She was President of the Cleveland School of Art; and Episcopalianism and Art soon formed an inextricable relation in my mind. Also, she was said to have the finest library in the state; and this too was no doubt due to her Episcopal character. That she was a great botanist, likewise, seemed quite understandable: being an Episcopalian, she naturally would be something of the sort.

This point of view, to be sure, was hardly justified by the biographical data. Mrs. Bradford was actually reared in a Presbyterian household, but decided to become an Episcopalian when she was a very little girl, through discovering an Episcopal Prayer Book in the house. The catechism, she discovered, was much shorter than the Presbyterian catechism. It was so short that she learned it by heart in one sitting. This made a strong appeal to her passion for efficiency; and she decided then that she would become an Episcopalian when she grew up.

It was love at first sight, when I first met her, as far as I was concerned. Love and adoration and worship. Her people would be my people, I felt instinctively, and her God would be my God, even if he were not a Methodist.

She had an adopted daughter, a dear little thing,

as cute and lovely a maiden as I had ever seen. But I did not think about the daughter then. It was the girl's mother, who later became my mother-in-law, with whom I first fell in love.

Mrs. Bradford and I had wonderful talks together. She talked to me about horses and about all the things I knew; then she talked quite as simply about my studies and about religion and God.

Her idea of God was rather strange to me, but the more I became acquainted with it, the more illuminating it seemed. I had always supposed that a sinner had to "get right with God" before the Church could mean much to him. The Church might hold meetings, to be sure, and warn him of his sins; and it might urge him to come to the altar and make a complete surrender; nevertheless, the actual dealings between the sinner and God were strictly personal, and everything centered about one great moment known as "conversion." There was a very definite division in my mind between the saved and the unsaved, and though the saved might fall and the unsaved be reclaimed, the exact line of demarcation remained fixed and immutable. It was not given to me to know, of course, just who was on one side of the line and who on the other, so one had to be very cautious in judging those who claimed to be converted. There was no question, however, as to unbelievers and scoffers, and as to those who did certain things which everybody knew were sinful.

When a man became saved, as I saw it, he partook of the sacrament. He not only had a right to do so, but he fairly loved it. If he were still unsaved, however, partaking of the sacrament was a sacrilege.

Mrs. Bradford seemed to have an entirely differ-

ent point of view. The sacraments to her were means of grace. The purpose of the Church was not to hold revival meetings but to initiate the worshipers into the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. The forms and ceremonies, she felt, helped do this. They were not efficacious of themselves, to be sure; but if one wanted to lead a Christian life, the sacraments would help.

She took it for granted that I wanted to be good; and that I wanted to be self-respecting was, to her, rather to my credit than otherwise. She was an Episcopalian, and Episcopalians were all self-respecting. They did not go in for emotional tantrums, which left worshipers elated one day and down in the dumps the next, but rather sought to elevate the soul through calm, dignified, well-organized worship.

That was not the reason she gave for being an Episcopalian. The reason she gave was that the Episcopal Church was *the* Church. Belonging to *a* church was hardly the same thing. Jesus had not founded *a* church: He had founded *the* Church, and he had placed it under the supervision of his Apostles, equal in authority, who had handed down this authority direct to the bishops of to-day.

The Roman Catholic Church, she explained to me, was also a branch of *the* Church. Its priests and bishops were also in direct Apostolic Succession; but the Bishop of Rome had tried to dominate all the other bishops, thus upsetting that equality of authority which had been ordained by Christ. In England, fortunately, the Church would not be drawn into any such error. In England, the true tradition was maintained, and the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States was directly descended,

physically, intellectually and spiritually, from the Church of England.

Mrs. Bradford believed all this devoutly. She believed some of it, no doubt, because she had been brought up to believe it; but she believed the rest, I think, because she was Mrs. Bradford. She was a sweet, serene, thoroughly noble woman, and the Protestant Episcopal Church was her natural habitat. The "best people" worshiped here, and the clergy, for the most part, were men of highest culture. There was nothing crude or undignified in their presentation of religion.

No, no, she was not a snob. Had she been snobbish, she would never have interested herself in such a son of poverty and hard knocks as I. She was catholic in her sympathies, and she wanted everybody to attain culture; but, pending such a spiritual utopia, she lived aristocratically, never once forgetting, however, the obligations of nobility. Her charities were bounteous, but they were never cold, for she gave not merely her money but her personal interest and enthusiasm.

She had no trouble at all in converting me to her religious views. She could have converted me, I know, without once mentioning the subject.

It was a glorious experience—finding God like that. It was what I had been waiting for all my life. God, I began to see, was not terrible. He was awful in his majesty, and all that, but the Episcopal service provided a way to cope with that emergency. It fixed things so that one could be very dignified in his humility. One could prostrate himself before God, in the Episcopal service, and still retain an enormous self-respect.

Then, there was that promise, which I had never kept, that I would give my life to God's service. I had avoided that debt heretofore: now I longed to pay it. What, in fact, could be better, now that I had a clearer conception of what God's service was? The Episcopal ministry was the answer. The Episcopal ministry was *the* ministry. And incidentally, if I were an Episcopal minister, would not this wonderful woman whom I worshiped come to have a profound respect for me? It was fine to be singled out for her benefactions, but to make her proud of me—that would be sublime.

III

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING SMUG

I decided to become an Episcopal clergyman, though I was not prepared to enter a theological seminary. My benefactress solved that problem easily. She engaged tutors for me, and she and I studied many of the courses, including Latin and Greek, together.

I soon achieved a reputation for cleverness which I did not deserve. I learned quickly, but I did not learn anything. I mastered the textbooks because there was nothing to stop me and because I realized that I had to master them in order to get where I had definitely set out to go.

That was to the theological seminary. I went cross-lots. I did not stop to learn anything that a theological student did not have to know. I thought I was getting an education, but I was not. I believed what the textbooks told me. They told me that the earth was round, and so it was; but if they had told me that the earth was flat, it would have presented no difficulties to me.

With Mrs. Bradford studying with me, learning was a joy. But we did not go in—at least I did not—for any new ideas. Doubting was no part of the curriculum. We were after information, and the information which was authorized by the best authorities was good enough for us.

In an incredibly short time, it seemed, I entered the seminary. Here, again, I was not handicapped by any misgivings. I knew exactly what I wanted to do. I wanted to prepare myself for God's service; and God's service consisted of building up the Protestant Episcopal Church. Once more, I took the short-cut, and did not learn anything which a Protestant Episcopal clergyman did not have to know.

Some of my fellow students were greatly disturbed at this time by some strange new criticisms of religion. An English scientist named Charles Darwin had written a book which irreligious people everywhere were hailing as a masterpiece. Some of these students had read the book, and it had made them pause. It made them question some of the things which Christian ministers were required to believe.

How foolish of them, I thought, to read such books! This book was not a necessary part of our training for the ministry, and why should anybody in training for the ministry read anything that would tend to weaken his faith? If I were to be efficient in God's service, I reasoned, my faith must be unshaken; most assuredly I would not go out of my way to shake it.

So I did not learn Darwin. I learned the *answers* to Darwin, which was all that seemed necessary, and saved a lot of time.

When I graduated from the seminary, I was beyond question the best equipped young theologue in all Ohio. To be sure, I did not know anything, but that is no handicap to a theologue. It was a positive advantage. One who does not know anything can believe whatever he finds most convenient, until the

time comes when he has to check up; and checking-up time never comes to a theologian.

It is a theologian's business to get people to heaven; and if he performs the work to his own satisfaction, there is no possible way of proving that he has not succeeded. If an engineer builds a bridge to get people across a river, the situation is very different. If the bridge falls down, we know at once that there was some error in his doctrine; and if we can find the engineer, we prove the point by confronting him with the actual results. In the case of the theologian, however, we must wait until we get to heaven for any such show-down.

If he gets us over, criticism should rightly stop; but if he does not get us over, it will have stopped anyway. Even if it should turn out that there is no after life, it will be nobody's job to remind him of the fact.

Obviously, then, the most sensible thing a theologian can do is to become self-satisfied, and to read nothing and learn nothing that will interrupt his self-satisfaction. He has nothing to fear from any criticisms except his own; but if he once gets to criticizing himself, he is lost. To build a bridge to a known spot in the universe requires precision, and the more the builder can learn about his job, the better equipped he will be to go through with it. But to build a bridge to the unknown—to a place the very existence of which is unknown and unknowable—requires nothing whatever except a comfortable living and enough routine work to keep his mind so occupied that it will never get around to asking questions.

In this rôle, I was an immediate success. I chose missionary work as my specialty. The way to get to

heaven, I perceived very clearly, was through the Protestant Episcopal Church; and to build up that church was beyond a doubt the most important work that any human being could engage in. It kept me busy, too, for there were a hundred Americans outside the Church to every Episcopalian.

Had I had any doubts, or had I read Darwin, I could never have succeeded as I did. I might still have remained a Churchman; but I could not have brought to my work the cocksure attitude which I now possessed. The chances are that I should have got other people wondering whether the Church is the complete answer to all human problems; and that, whatever the intellectuals may say for it, is no way to get churches built.

My method was very simple. I would go to a town and find some Episcopalians, if there were any there. If there were none, I would hold a mission, and presently there would be some. Then I would give each of them some work to do, and the first thing I knew, a church was being built. It was not necessary to argue about Darwin. It was not necessary to argue about anything. All that was necessary was to get the church started, and then get it finished. This did not leave much time for arguments. Some of my more intellectual but less successful colleagues remarked that I was making Episcopalians out of fence-posts. I do not think that was fair. At any rate, those churches were quite as successful as the average.

And I was very comfortable. There was no question in my mind that the Lord was blessing my work, and fairly beaming on me. Bill Brown, the illiterate and half-starved farmhand, was but a memory. The

Reverend William M. Brown, conspicuously successful clergyman, had arrived; and he was not only a man of promise but a man of great influence in church affairs, for he had married the adopted daughter of the great Episcopalian philanthropist, Mrs. Mary S. Bradford.

I was successful but I was by no means big. Had I been a big man, I could never have succeeded as I did with this missionary work.

Big men might attract a few big people in the communities into their particular church; but leading spirits thus capable of being weaned from their former affiliations were few and far between. If the Church were to grow, or if it were even to hold its own in membership, it would be necessary to keep a constant stream of converts flowing into it; and these converts must be drawn in the main from the ordinary common people. Surrounded by Episcopalian influences, they might become extraordinary in time, but competition was keen and no church could afford to be too exclusive.

Being an ordinary person, I found it possible to work with these ordinary people. Bishop Leonard, the new bishop, soon noticed this. He himself was an extraordinary man. He was from a family of bankers, and he had come to the episcopacy after a brilliant career as rector of the famous St. John's Church in Washington. He wanted earnestly to carry on missionary work, but he was socially rather out of touch with the masses whom it seemed most necessary to reach.

I began my work in Galion and branched out presently into all the neighboring towns. When the new bishop came to visit me, he found classes in all of

them waiting for confirmation. In one place there might be only five or six, but again there would be ten and sometimes twenty or more; but in every town there were some, every time the bishop made his rounds.

"Brown, you are doing a great work," he said.

I was elated. I had, I thought, been rather clever. That I was no preacher, I felt, myself; and whenever I had organized a mission and there was any preaching to be done, I usually managed to bring in some big preacher for the job. I myself simply conducted the mission. I instructed the classes in what Episcopalianism was. I let them in on all that I had learned in the seminary.

I believed it all implicitly. I told them how sin had come into the world through Adam and just why it was necessary that a Second Adam should shed his blood to wash that stain away. I understood why, in those days, and I held nothing back.

I also understood why the Protestant Episcopal Church was *the* Church, and not simply *a* church, and I explained that too. The people accepted my explanations. They did not argue with me and I did not argue with them. They were not bristling with doubts in those days as the common people are today. They simply wanted to know the ropes—ecclesiastical and theological—and I showed them the ropes. Since I was a regular graduate of a theological seminary, my authority to do so was seldom questioned.

And Bishop Leonard noticed it. He told me that I would have to become Arch-Deacon of Ohio; which meant that I must do all over the state about what I had been doing in Galion and vicinity.

He also heard some of my addresses in which I nstructed these would-be Episcopalians. One of those addresses particularly affected him. It was on the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Communion.

Of course, I could not explain this as anything short of a Miracle. But why should I? The Church believed in miracles, the people believed in miracles and I believed in miracles. This being the case, there was nothing to hinder us from accepting this particular miracle, especially if it were all tied up with some of our most precious feelings, which it was.

I talked on this momentous question before a Convocation at Massilon. Bishop Leonard heard me, and he was affected again. I was striking a note, apparently, which the more sophisticated clergymen were missing. The theological seminary at Gambier, he decided, especially needed this message of simple faith. Nothing would do but that I must become a lecturer in the seminary.

So I became a lecturer in the seminary. My first course of lectures there was afterwards put together in my first book. It was called *The Church for Americans*.

The book was an instant success. Bishops all over the country immediately seized upon it and distributed it throughout their dioceses. It ran through nineteen editions. A little later, very logically, I was elected and consecrated as Bishop of the See of Arkansas.

The Church for Americans, I should perhaps explain, was the Protestant Episcopal Church.

IV

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN SCIENCE AND FUNERALS

It is customary, when a man attains wealth, honor and success in America, for him to broadcast his epic, moralistically, for the inspiration of the young, boasting of his early struggles and attributing his achievements to his industry, honesty and thrift.

I am unable to follow this time-honored custom. As you have already learned, I did attain wealth, honor and success, but what my early struggles had to do with them I have never been able to figure out.

Had I been less industrious as a boy, in fact, I might have escaped from that farm much sooner than I did, and have come earlier in life under the blessed influences of civilization. And had I been less honest as an old man, I would never have got into all the trouble of these later years.

As for thrift, that undoubtedly is the source of wealth; but it is not a man's own thrift that makes him wealthy, but the thrift of other people. It seems axiomatic to me that you can not have wealth by going without it. I went without it for more than twenty-five years and I know. For the rest of my life, however, although never a millionaire, I have been rated as a man of wealth; but this is obviously because a sufficient number of other people have gone without it. On their thrift I have thrived.

I have not been a maker of wealth. I have been

simply a receiver. If the makers of wealth had taken to themselves the wealth which they made, there would certainly be poor pickings for such as I. But the fact remains that I did achieve wealth, honor and success. But I achieved wealth because it was given to me, honor because I had a pull and success because I did not know what I was doing.

I do not mean to poke fun at myself. I made a good bishop, as bishops go, and I do not think I could have done that unless I had possessed some qualities which are generally recognized as good.

I was ignorant, to be sure, but I was honest: had I been ignorant and crooked, I am quite sure I should never have been selected for church leadership. On the other hand, had I known in those days what I know now, I should have had to be most dishonest in order to secure any such preferment.

Also I had boundless energy, and I was ambitious to advance the work of the Lord. The physical hardships of the task never dissuaded me. Had I been lazy, or inclined to let things slide, I should likewise have failed. On the other hand, it was this very energy of mine, this mental restlessness, which led to my undoing. When I broke down from overwork, when I lay on my back and could no longer go out building churches and getting them filled up with Episcopalians, it was still absolutely imperative that I be struggling with something. It was then that I got to struggling with the works of Darwin. And being what I was, and learning what I did from Darwin, I found it impossible to let things slide.

But that is a bit ahead of my story. Being Bishop of Arkansas was a sufficiently busy job so that I never had to go out of my way to find things to

struggle with. What was happening in the world at large was of small interest to me. Miracles were happening but I did not notice them. At least I did not recognize them as miracles.

Scientists in laboratories—men who had accepted Darwin but had never accepted Christ—were already doing greater works than Christ had ever done. Jesus had prophesied something of the sort, and I wonder now that these doings did not interest me. But as I had understood the prophecies, his saints, not atheists, were to perform these wonders; and what the atheists did, I felt, could have little spiritual significance.

Jesus had healed the sick within very narrow limits; his cures being confined for the most part to afflicted persons in the immediate neighborhood who could crowd around him personally. But these "unbelievers," working with microscopes and test-tubes, were actually analyzing one disease after another and isolating the germs. In some cases, they had discovered specifics. Diphtheria, for instance, which had choked countless thousands of God's little ones to death, in spite of prayers to Jesus and in spite of everything the saints could do, yielded magically to the charm which these Darwinites had discovered and were sending out for the relief of all sufferers all over the known world.

Jesus had "cast out devils"; and I was still preaching about it. I failed to note the fact, or else considered it insignificant, that no intelligent person, even I myself, would ever attempt to treat bedevilment to-day by ordering the devil out of the patient and into some near-by pig. The scientists, mostly atheistic, in the sense that churchmen used the term, had

somehow changed everybody's mind on this question of demoniac possession. We who were most orthodox still believed in a devil who still went about prompting rational human beings to sin. But we had somehow dropped the notion which Jesus and his contemporaries all seemed to have, that epilepsy and the other insanities were caused by imps of Satan crawling up out of hell and somehow worming their way into the human system.

Jesus walked on water, but not in any socially consequential way. Just one bishop, it was my understanding, tried to learn the trick; and even Peter never made a second attempt. Apparently, the secret of water-walking died with its discoverer. We of the Church could not point to one saint who had duplicated the feat, to say nothing of improving upon it; and we never encouraged our converts to experiment in that direction. We urged them, to be sure, in a general way, to imitate Christ; but if we found one trying to imitate Him in such detail as this, it was conclusive proof to us that the man was crazy.

In the meantime, the conquest of the water, not by miracle workers but by those who scoffed at the very notion of miracles, was one of the most obvious social phenomena of our age. Boats had been invented which could sail straight into the teeth of the gale: boats which could take a whole city like Capernaum in one booking and could land them, usually, at Ellis Island, on the very day prophesied in their advertising folders.

It was possible, of course, that something might happen to these steamships after they had sailed beyond the horizon toward the Western Continent,

the very existence of which was undreamed of by Jesus and his saints. The engines might get out of order, or there might be some other accident. But these scoffers at miracles—these scientists who claimed no divine inspiration for their achievements, now wrought a miracle of life-saving to meet such emergencies, which was more amazing, more marvelous and more significant spiritually than all the miracles of the New Testament put together.

They fixed things so that a ship in distress, no matter what longitude and latitude she might be in, could talk through the ether to all other vessels on the ocean and to wireless stations in all the ports.

If a fire broke out in mid-ocean, or the ship were otherwise disabled, it no longer meant that all on board must needs perish and that all who knew them would remain forever blankly ignorant of their fate. Now the whole world might know exactly what their peril was; and within a few minutes after the sending of their S.O.S., passengers and crew might learn that some great liner, two or three hundred miles away, was speeding to their rescue.

No, death was not conquered by these scientists, but they achieved more toward the conquest of death than all the professors of supernaturalism had ever achieved throughout human history.

Jesus, I believed, cured leprosy—in a few stray incidents. There was no evidence that he did, but a myth had been handed down to that effect, and I believed it. I believed it because I was told to believe it. I understood that it was a sin not to believe it.

There were a lot of myths handed down from the same period which I did not believe. I did not believe, for instance, that Romulus and Remus were

suckled by a wolf. The reason I did not believe that was simply that it did not seem likely. It had been handed down in holy writ, but not in writ which I was bound to consider holy. I was privileged to believe it or not, according to how the evidence appealed to me; and, there being no evidence, there was no appeal.

To be sure, I could not prove that Romulus and Remus were not suckled by a wolf; nor can I prove to-day that Jonah was not swallowed by a fish, nor that Jesus did not cure leprosy and raise Lazarus from the dead. But there was as much reason to believe one story as the others; and wherever I felt at liberty to use my brains in the matter, I rejected the theory of the miraculous.

The town infidel and I were in perfect agreement on the wolf story. We not only believed that a wolf did not raise up human children, who then educated themselves or were educated by the gods to a point where they were able to build a city, but we both had our doubts as to whether there ever were such persons as Romulus and Remus.

But we disagreed sharply on the whale story, and on the leprosy story, and on the resurrection story. And then, strangely enough, we found ourselves in perfect accord again concerning the miracle of wireless.

How could a man refuse to believe the "accredited" miracles of the Bible, I wondered, when he found it possible to believe in radio? Those were the days in which I still reasoned like a bishop. He does not know what wireless is, I reflected. He can not explain it. Certainly he can not figure it out for himself. He accepts these achievements on faith. He

believes Marconi. He believes the scientists. And when he sets sail on a ship nowadays, he believes that that ship is protected by wireless. Why does he refuse to accept Jesus on faith? If he were to do so, he would have proof in his own heart that the Word of God is true, and he would use it thereafter as a lamp to his feet and a light unto his path.

Of course, I did not look up the town infidel and put these crushing arguments to him. I was much too dignified to do that. I spoke with authority. Behind me was not only the Word of God but all the respectable traditions of scholarship as well. At least, I assumed that there was. I was told that there was, and while I did not have much scholarship myself, I had had ample training in the art of when and where to believe what I was told. Backed by such authority, there was no reason why I should debate the question. I could prepare my pronouncements instead in the seclusion of my study, and then pronounce them from the fortress of the Cathedral, where no impious doubter would be given an opportunity to cross-examine.

There was no occasion, in fact, to enter into debate on any of these questions. There was no outbreak of infidelity that I could notice. The Church, to be sure, was not taken as seriously as it should have been. People were too worldly and too absorbed in what I called material things. But when death came to a household, when people were past human aid and all the achievements of science were of no avail, they sent not for the town infidel but for me.

He had nothing to give them to brighten that dark hour. I had real comfort. I could hold out the blessed

assurance of the life beyond, for which this life was but a preparation.

The town infidel might have said, if he had wanted to, that I knew no more than he did about life beyond the grave. But he did not want to: or if he did say so, nobody wanted to hear him. In this hour, the Church was supreme. In this hour, all our boasted science did not count.

I must confess, since I have gone this far, that I can not remember any funeral in which I succeeded in making the mourners really happy.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life," I repeated. "Corruption hath put on incorruption and mortality hath put on immortality." Nevertheless, for all this cheerful outcome, the occasion was uniformly recognized as sad. Often, among the most unquestioning believers, it was heart-breaking; and many times, strong as my own faith was, I myself have broken down in sheer sympathy over the agony of devout Christians when they said their last farewell to the body from which, they believed, their loved one had just been liberated. For some reason or other which I can not even to-day explain satisfactorily, the grief of Christians under such circumstances has seemed quite as poignant as the grief of unbelievers.

No funeral in my experience, I confess, was ever a complete triumph for the bereaved lovers and beloved. But they were frequently complete triumphs for the Church. I do not know what the Church could have done without them. Death was our great stock in trade; and had we had everything that we did have, *except this claim concerning life beyond the grave,* I am certain that we, as a church, would have retained no hold upon America at all.

Yet it was only a claim. No one will dispute that. We said we knew that there was such a life, and we claimed to know a good deal about it; but we never assumed to prove that there was, in the way those modern miracles I spoke about were constantly being proved.

We said that Jesus died and rose again; and we also pointed to Lazarus and a few other very remarkable cases. But in none of these cases did we produce any scientific proofs. The most we could do was to claim that scholarship upheld the stories, although scholarship was not doing anything of the kind, and then to invoke some spiritual power to induce belief without any objective proof whatever.

In fact, when certain believers began to look for objective proofs of life beyond the grave, we arrayed ourselves as violently as the atheists did against the whole business. Spiritualism, we pointed out, was absurd. Moreover, it was wrong, and we warned our flocks against it. Our faith did not rest upon table-tipping and all such nonsense. It rested rather upon the Word of God; or, at least, upon a book which we said was the Word of God because somebody had told us that it was the Word of God and it was a sin for us not to believe that it was the Word of God.

In the meantime, the scientists—the modern miracle workers—demanded no such faith. They did not ask the people of America to believe their claims. The people might believe them or not, just as they saw fit, and no scientist would feel outraged. If they did not believe that a wagon could run without horses, that was strictly their business; but if they

happened to be interested and cared to see a demonstration, some automobile evangelist would be pleased to call.

That was the sort of evangelism which was occurring in America while I was Bishop of Arkansas and doing my best to evangelize it by altogether different methods. Telephones were being installed. Electric lights had come. Harvesters that worked like magic were revolutionizing the farms. Then there came the automobile. And presently, we learned that human beings were actually flying like birds.

It was more than magic: for magic is done on the stage, and its secrets are carefully withheld. No one knew, after seeing a pumpkin grow out of a plug hat, how the trick was done; and even if one were to learn, one could not buy a plug hat and settle his future economic problem by living on pumpkin pie. At best, we knew it was only an illusion; but these wonders of the laboratory were something very different. We might not understand them, but they were real. They could be explained, and every feat could be duplicated by those who cared to study the explanation.

Jesus' walking on water had achieved nothing like this. Assuming that he actually did the trick, I could not use it in my business. I had not the slightest idea of how to do it, to say nothing of promoting the practice among the people of Arkansas.

And there I was (although I did not wake up to the situation until several years later) competing with American science for a hearing with the American people. I wanted to tell the people how to live, and all I could tell them was to believe in Jesus. American science, in the meantime, was organizing

their daily lives, and encouraging them, day by day, to believe what they could find out.

It was an unequal struggle; and the Church gradually lost its hold upon the people. I was not consciously opposing science and the scientists were not consciously antagonizing me. But we stood for two diametrically opposite ways of looking at life; and while people were living, they edged over more and more to the scientific way. Only at funerals did the Church hold its own.

V

COMING DOWN WITH HERESY

This "struggle between science and religion" did not engage my attention at the time. I was too busy with other matters. I could vaguely sense a certain lack of religious conviction in the community, and even within the Church itself; and it was quite obvious, on the other hand, that the "times" were changing fast.

But I did not connect these two observations. Modern industry, to me, was a strictly "material" change; and by a material change, I seemed to mean a change that did not much matter. The other change was spiritual, vital; but if humanity was losing its spiritual vitality, it was the fault of humanity. Certainly it was not the fault of the medicine which we were prescribing for it.

That medicine, I knew, was holy. If people refused to take it, it was all their fault. If they did take it, and it did not work, that was their fault too. At any hazard, we must not change the medicine. We had a perfect formula, delivered once for all to the saints. It was compounded of the blood of Christ; and to suggest changing the ingredients in any way, simply because it was not having the desired effect upon the patient—that would be heresy.

That was about my attitude when I became Bishop of Arkansas. That it was my attitude, in fact, was

the main reason I was made a bishop. My book, *The Church for Americans,* was charged with it. There was no suggestion in this book that America should analyze its spiritual needs and organize a church which should cater to them. My whole idea was that not only the formula but the ecclesiastical organization had been prepared for it.

The formula was delivered once for all to the saints, but the ecclesiastical organization had had to grope its way a bit before it was thoroughly perfected to fit this particular nation. But that adjustment had all occurred in England, under the auspices of the Crown. To be sure, there was and could be but one Catholic Church; but it was plain that there should be language branches of the one true Church, and the Anglican Church was obviously the church for the English speaking countries.

No, I did not suggest a union between Church and State. My simple suggestion was that all Americans become Episcopalians. I did not even suggest that they take this institution over and fashion it to their needs. It was already, as I understood it, perfectly fashioned. All that America had to do was to conform to it as it stood.

America, for some reason or other, did not follow my suggestion. It was confused, perhaps, by a flood of Methodist and Baptist propaganda which was let loose at about the same time. The Roman Catholics also were quite generally unimpressed. But the book surely was popular among Episcopalians.

Now, in spite of my writing such a book, I was not a fool. The only trouble with me was that I was ignorant. I did not know anything; and I believed very seriously what I had been taught by a lot of

Churchmen who could not, in the nature of the circumstances, believe them as seriously as I.

There was not a new idea within that whole volume. There was not a passage remotely applicable to the times in which I lived. It was orthodoxy, pure and simple; not only doctrinal but ecclesiastical. It could not have been written by any one but an ignoramus. It could not have been written, for instance, by those learned bishops who bought it by the hundred; for they, in spite of their will to be orthodox, had unconsciously adjusted themselves, to some little degree at least, to the thought processes of the world in which they lived.

I had not. Such an adjustment usually occurs during adolescence; and if you remember how I spent my adolescent years, you may understand why no such adjustment occurred to me.

Adolescence is the period when the boy breaks through the teachings of his childhood and begins to take note of things as they are. Often this results in a complete abandonment of his childhood faith. Often it means a conversion and a consecration to the Church, but a radical reinterpretation of what religion means. It is seldom that youth can be perfectly orthodox; and if he does conform absolutely to the faith of the former generation, it is likely to be because he is too sick or too tired to blaze any new trail.

Many of my fellow bishops had read Darwin in their youth. They could not help it. It was an adventure, and youth can not help adventuring. They came through the experience, seemingly, with their faith intact, but they did not come through with exactly the same outlook on life as they had had before.

Darwin and the other exponents of modern thought did things to them. Willy-nilly, these new and utterly unorthodox notions got into their thinking. They recovered in time and tried their best to be orthodox; but one need only to compare their utterances with the sermons of a century or two before to see how far from orthodox they really were.

But I was naïvely orthodox. In the nature of my early experiences, this was possible, for orthodox churchmanship was an exciting adventure to me. Of home training I had had almost nothing. When other children were in school, under the discipline of a curriculum against which they eventually learned to rebel, I was slaving away on that miserable farm.

When life did open up glamorously to me, it was not the life of the day. It was the life of a day that had passed. There was nothing in my experience to cause me to rebel against it, or to seek to change it in the least. I had no impulse to break away from conventional culture, for I was madly eager to break into it. The result was that, when I took my orthodoxy in hand and sallied forth to save the world with it, I could wield it with a faith and an enthusiasm which many of my more learned colleagues lacked.

I do not claim for a minute that I did more good than they. But I made more Episcopalians; and that happened to be the standard by which our work was measured. I built churches in churchless communities, also in over-churched communities; for if a community did not have an Episcopal Church, it was not all that a community ought to be. Also, I revived dead churches—churches that had been instituted where they were not wanted—and every time I succeeded in doing that, I felt that I was doing the

greatest and most important work that was being done in the United States.

Scientists in the laboratories might discover the germs of disease and learn how to eliminate plague. Engineers might govern the course of rivers or reclaim great deserts, and do away with famines and floods. This, I reflected, was all very good. But it was all in the realm of our material welfare, and was on a far different plane from the building of Episcopal Churches, where children might be taught that Jesus cured blindness by the application of a mixture of saliva and dirt, or that the Red Sea divided in the middle in order to let God's chosen people walk to the other side.

All told, during my ministry I built nearly one hundred churches, including the dead ones which I revived. I have no means of knowing how much good all this accomplished. If these churches had not been built, no doubt many Americans who are now good Churchmen might have become nothing but Methodists and Presbyterians, and some might have joined no church at all. But that does not comfort me much to-day. I did a lot of work, and I do not like to think that that work was wasted. I should like to believe, if I could only do so, that somebody somewhere was better equipped for life because of all this outpouring of energy and zeal.

I was an ignoramus, I admit, but I was not a fool. The world was passing by me, to be sure, and I was not observing it; but the time came when I could not be utterly smug concerning the organization of the Church. My orthodoxy, pure as it was, did not mean that I was naturally averse to learning anything. It was an accident, rather. It was something I had

learned when my passion for learning was hot. That being the case, it was almost inevitable that I should some day learn something else; and while the stage was all set to keep me from seeing just what was going on in America, I did begin to notice a few things that were going on in the Church.

And one of the things that I began to notice was our failure to reach the Negroes of Arkansas. The Methodists and Baptists were reaching them, but in spite of the fact that we were the one true Church, while they were nothing but denominations, we seemed to be making no impression upon the Negroes at all.

I began to think about this. Had I been temperamentally orthodox, instead of accidentally so, I should probably not have done that; for the temperamentally orthodox accept things as they find them —not only the doctrines and the forms of organization which have been handed down from God, but also the habits and the practices which have arisen from God knows where.

And the habitual attitude of our church toward the Negro was one of superiority. Our bishops were all white. Our leaders were all white. If we raised any black leaders above white people, we knew we might as well move out of Arkansas altogether. But in our ecclesiastical organization, I observed, we could not even raise black leaders over black people; and we were already practically out of Arkansas as far as the black man was concerned.

A bishop, it was understood by us, is practically a prince in his diocese. He is an autocrat. He is the spiritual head of his dominion; and his dominion is a certain stretch of territory, regardless of how many

different races of people may be living in it. Therefore, according to our logic, there could be but one bishop in one diocese; and according to the logic of circumstances in America, that bishop must be white.

But according to the further logic of those circumstances, I observed, the one true Church was making no appeal whatever to a certain large and well-defined section of said diocese. A Negro, according to my orthodoxy, was a soul in peril. Jesus and the Apostles had drawn no color line. It was our business to save his soul, and we were not doing it. I saw no way in which we could do it except by tampering a bit with our ecclesiastical machine.

So I wrote my book *The Crucial Race Question.* In it I suggested that the Negroes be permitted to have their own Protestant Episcopal Church, under Negro clergymen and bishops: a church which should be thoroughly autonomous but should bear somewhat the same relation to us that we then bore toward the Church of England.

That was my first heresy: my first deviation, at least, from the conventional, Protestant Episcopal way of looking at things. It stirred up some bitter criticism. If I fully realized the nature of the Episcopacy, I was told, I could make no such proposal; for under it a bishop would not be supreme in his own diocese. There was only one Arkansas, for instance, so how could there be two bishops of Arkansas?

That was the argument which was launched against me. But when people's orthodoxy is disturbed, they do not always rationalize the disturbance perfectly. My proposal, to some good white Christians at the time, was more than an ecclesiasti-

cal heresy. It was a social heresy. I was putting the black man, they said, on an equal with the white. The blacks, to be sure, were entitled to have their churches; but that a white bishop must recognize a black bishop as his equal in his own diocese seemed preposterous.

Strange to say, I received a very different criticism from northern states. In Boston, where I sometimes went to raise money for my missionary enterprises, I was nearly mobbed. My proposal, it seems, had been represented to Negroes there as a scheme to keep the colored people out of the white churches—an attempt to Jim-Crow religion, and all that. I was amazed at the demonstration. My purpose had been to make overtures to the Negro. I could not understand the antagonism I had created, but it all set me thinking.

The criticisms nettled me. The reason they nettled me, as I see it now, is that my own position was so unsound. After all, I did believe in Jim Crowism. I was certain in my heart that I had no prejudice against the Negro: but I had accepted the current assumption as to the racial differences; and from those assumptions nothing but misunderstanding could result. I believed that Jehovah had invented five separate human races and that it was his holy intention to keep them separate. The existing race prejudices, from this point of view, were easily interpreted as providential provisions through which this divine purpose was being carried out. But Jesus had died, I believed, for all mankind alike. One might do his best to harmonize that belief with his theories of white superiority, but the result must be unsatisfactory. I had balanced magic against

magic and had arrived at a pretty good answer. By the same process, however, I might have arrived anywhere.

Thinking is no way to back out of heresies. Thinking only gets you farther into them. Of course, it had that effect on me.

Besides, I had started something; and if one once begins starting things, instead of preserving them intact, it is a most difficult matter to stop. The "Arkansas Plan," for all the storm that had been raised about it, would not down. The Church had to do something about it. It never quite adopted the plan, but it adopted some of the very parts of it that had been criticized most severely. It organized colored congregations under colored clergymen and bishops; and the colored bishops eventually sat in the House of Bishops on a theoretical level with the whites.

Many now believe that my plan would have worked out much better. As it is, they say, the Negro bishops have only nominal authority, and the white bishop really decides all important questions in the diocese. The Church, at any rate, has never become exactly popular with the colored people; and under the Arkansas Plan, I am sure, its appeal would have been much more general.

However that may be, the cry of heresy was forgotten. Something had to be done, it seems; and when something has to be done, heresy does not matter; for the plan eventually adopted was quite as heretical as mine. Doubtless I noticed this subconsciously, at the time; for it was not long before I wrote another book, which kicked up a much more serious storm.

The Methodist and Baptist churches, I began to notice, were succeeding along many lines of Christian endeavor where the Protestant Episcopal Church was not. In spite of the fact that they were not the true Church, they seemed to be bringing souls to Christ much more rapidly than we. The more I thought about it, the more I wondered if we were not a bit too assertive of our superiority generally.

At about this time, Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan left a sum of fifty thousand dollars to be used by our church in the cause of church unity. I got to thinking about that. I got to wondering upon what basis all these churches could be brought together. When the House of Bishops met, and got around to considering this matter, I found myself particularly interested in the discussion.

I had not been in the habit of participating in such discussions. To tell the truth, I always felt somewhat overawed by the superior scholarship of my colleagues. So on this occasion, as usual, I listened, with no intention of saying anything myself.

However, as one brother after another spoke, I became uneasy. They were all in favor of church union, apparently, but only on the understanding that we were the one true Church. The door of fellowship was open to all the denominations; but of course they must recognize Apostolic Succession, and the fact that we had it while they did not.

Finally I could contain myself no longer, and I told my brethren that this attitude would never do. It might be all right, I said, for us to believe that we were superior, but if we had any real superiority we had better not mention it to the other churches.

If we do, I said, we will not achieve church union, for the simple reason that they will not unite.

Let us keep our superiority right where it is, I urged; then, after we have effected church union, let us use it to raise the whole mass up to our standard. But if we are going to propose union, let us make the proposal as equals, not as superiors talking down to them. *If we are going to have church union, we must have it on the level.*

My little speech was not well received. That was doubtless due, I thought, to my inexpert way of presenting the idea, not to the idea itself. I felt sure of my position, and I felt sure that everybody could see it if I were to present it thoroughly. So I wrote another book: *The Level Plan for Church Union.*

That book created a real storm. Some of the bishops burned it. Some good churchmen demanded then that I be tried for heresy. Nothing, it appeared, had to be done just then about church unity; and nothing was done, except to talk about it in glowing generalities and to pass meaningless resolutions in its favor. This released Episcopalians generally to take up the question—not whether or not my plan was good, but whether or not it was heretical.

In the midst of this storm, my health broke down. I do not know that the storm had anything to do with that. It may have made my work harder but I did not notice it at the time. I only noticed that I was wearing out. My case was diagnosed as nervous dyspepsia, and I was given a leave of absence of two years, turning the diocese in the meantime over to my coadjutor.

I went to my old home in Galion, Ohio, in 1911. I was very ill. It did not seem that I would live out

my two-year leave of absence. I was still thoroughly orthodox in doctrine, but my belief in the infallibility of ecclesiasticism had been shaken.

I had not made a failure of my career. As things were reckoned, I had made an extraordinary success. So long as I did not understand what I was doing, and did not do any thinking about it, ecclesiastical honors were showered upon me; but as soon as I began to study situations and to deal with things as they really were, the net result was criticism amounting almost to abuse.

That there could be so much bitterness in the Church astonished me. I brooded about it. I brooded about a lot of things. In 1912, since my health had not improved, I resigned my diocese, counted my life's work closed and decided to spend my remaining days in obscurity. But the letters of criticism kept pouring in. Each letter compelled me to do a little more thinking; and every time I did any thinking, I moved a little further away from orthodoxy.

I remember one letter of warning especially, which gave me a severe shock. It was from the Bishop of Marquette. He told me that if I persisted in the line of thought which I was then pursuing, I would yet find myself denying the dogma of the Incarnation. It seemed utterly terrible at the time that any bishop should think that of me.

I answered these attacks as best I could. Sometimes I showed my letters to Doctor MacFarlane, my physician. He looked at me sympathetically, but I could see that he was not always impressed.

"Have you anything to suggest?" I once asked him.

"I suggest that you read Darwin," he said.

VI

MY UNIVERSE DISAPPEARS

I began to read *Origin of Species*. I became interested immediately. It was a completely new kind of reading matter to me. It seemed to take nothing for granted. It did not lay down a principle to be proved. There was no apologetics here, no attempt to "justify the ways of God to man." Also, there was no "inner light," and no profound conviction upon the part of the author that he had been ordained to extinguish other people's lights so that the whole world should hereafter use nothing but his.

I had thought of Darwin as issuing broadsides against religion. I do not know how I came to have such an impression, unless it was that I had learned the answers to all those broadsides. For I had preached against Darwin. I had preached against him exactly as I had been taught to preach against him, and I had been most effective. But the Darwin I was now reading did not seem to be the Darwin I had preached against at all.

The Darwin I had preached against was an impudent upstart who had defied the scholarship of the world by setting up his own little impious and atheistic theory that man had not been created, as the Holy Scriptures proclaimed, but that he had just happened to become a man, instead of some other queer form of animal life, because of the peculiar

conditions to which he found it necessary to adapt himself. And the burden of my answer to this broadside was that, if such were really the case, how would we feel when we or our loved ones came to die? Of course, I did not put it in so many words, but that was what it amounted to.

"What had Darwin to offer us?" That was the question that almost always landed exactly where I wanted it to land. The answer, obviously, was nothing. On the other hand, I was offering a home in the sky to whomsoever would believe what I told him to believe; and my promissory note to that effect was endorsed by all the clergymen of our church, and by all the saints and Apostles, and by the very Son of the Person who made and was now absolute owner of that sky.

Naturally, I thought that would fix Darwin.

But the Darwin I had at last got around to read did not seem to be so easily fixed. This Darwin was not seemingly concerned with making converts. He was just noticing things—living things—and watching how they acted. If any one were curious as to what he had noticed, he was quite willing to tell; but if any one were not curious, he had no criticism to make. Furthermore, if some one had noticed something that he had missed, or if his own notes were incorrect in any way, he would be awfully obliged if corrections would be made.

To me, who had been used to controversial literature, this was extraordinary reading. But it was exciting reading, for something very strange had happened to me. I had become curious about life.

Suddenly a great light dawned. I was about half through the book when it burst upon me. It was

blinding. It was staggering. It was not revealing, in the sense of giving me an understanding of things; it was dispelling, rather, and it took away all the understanding I had ever had.

The world that I had lived in up to that moment just disappeared. It did not merely fall into ruins. It collapsed, without leaving any ruins. I shut my eyes and groped about me for the old familiar darkness, but the darkness was not there. It had popped into nothingness, as darkness is likely to do when the light is turned on suddenly enough.

I do not relate this as a mystical experience. I have compared it, at times, to the story of Saul of Tarsus, who was also knocked into reverse by a sudden, blinding light. But I was not exactly knocked into reverse. Science did not speak to me, as Jesus is said to have spoken to Paul, asking me why I persecuted it. Science simply left me floored, to figure things out for myself as best I could. Science was not peeved. Science, apparently, did not care a snap whether I was illuminated properly or not.

But I had pushed the button and the light went on; and when the light was on, the darkness had to get out, carrying with it all the phenomena which the darkness had created.

And those phenomena which had been created by the darkness were the very things upon which my whole life had been built.

God, for instance—a personal God. Science had no objection to my having such a God, if I could only find one lying around; but it was impossible, now that the light had been switched on, for me to reconstruct the God which theology had handed to me back there in the dark.

The same thing went for heaven and hell, and for the Holy Scriptures. "Here is the universe," said Science, "and nobody on earth begins to know what is in it; go ahead and find out anything you can."

That was fair enough, perhaps, if I had not been a sick, old bishop. But there I was, retired and ready to die; actually worn out in the service of a God whom the theologians had given me, and about to pass on, within a few more months at most, to the heaven which the theologians had imagined.

Where was *that* heaven, I wanted to know. I had no time or strength to find another one.

"Search me," said the Universe: and that was all the satisfaction that I could get.

I had passports, I remembered, to that imaginary heaven. But assuming that there was a real heaven, what reason had I to believe that my passports would be good for that? As for searching the universe, I simply could not do it.

The universe had not seemed so big before the light went on; and I had not seemed so infinitesimally small. It had seemed quite reasonable yesterday that I should hold in my hand the Key to Life, for was I not a bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church? The Creator of the universe had himself selected me. This was his special church—more specially his church than any of the other Christian churches; and as for the non-Christian churches, they did not count with the Creator at all.

How childish it all seemed now. It was like waking from a dream, only that I was not waking to any familiar sights. My old theological universe had completely vanished. I found myself in a world of reality instead; but I was utterly unfamiliar with reality and,

old and tired as I was, I realized that I could get my bearings only by finding out how things actually do behave.

I was dazed and frightened. I began to cry. Then I shut the book which had so astounded me and tried to pray.

But I could not pray to the Creator of any such universe as I had just discovered. I had no reason to assume, in the first place, that there was any such Creator; and if there was, I could not fix his relation to the Protestant Episcopal Church, nor to my own position as a true believer. He surely was not the Creator whom I had believed in. The Creator with whom I had been dealing so intimately was nowhere around.

I took up the book again. I did not read it as I was accustomed to reading the Bible, and I did not swallow it as the final dictum of Absolute Truth. But as I read, the light became less blinding. I was not alone, I realized, in this new universe. Everybody else was in it too, and we were all feeling our way. Scientists find out certain principles, if they can, and then act upon them; theologians accept the principles which have been handed down to them, and then do not act upon them. Otherwise, they are very much alike.

To learn about life by noting how it behaves, instead of by laying down a law of behavior, surely had its fascinations. This was my first experience, and it filled me with terror, but I soon found that I could not stop. I finished *Origin of Species* more eager for knowledge that when I picked it up.

When I laid it down, it was only to search for another scientific work. More biology, at first, and then

geology and astronomy. I was not able to digest it all, I knew, but for weeks and months I read all the scientific literature I could lay my hands upon.

I did not grasp, and I did not attempt to grasp, all the theories that were broached. Some of the conclusions, I was well aware, might be erroneous; for the authors themselves were constantly amending their former findings and giving up theories which they had formerly held. While many of the truths upon which they all agreed were astounding to me, their attitude toward truth was more astounding yet.

The truth, as I had hitherto conceived it, was fixed, immutable; and the central principles of all truth were handed down from the original manufacturer and given to the Church for safe keeping. The Church, then, was the only dealer in truth upon which mankind could rely; but the Church did not discover truths, it did not dig them up, and it did not assume to improve upon any of the product which had been handed to it from on high.

These scientists, to a man, seemed to approach the truth from an altogether different angle. They criticized every formula that was handed to them. They submitted it to every sort of laboratory test; and if it did not work, they threw it away.

To them no formulas were sacred. Only the truth was sacred, and they admitted that they had not discovered that. They had merely discovered certain sets of facts, and when they got enough of these facts together, they constructed a theory; but instead of trying to preserve that theory intact, they did their best to tear it down. They seemed to have a sublime faith, somehow, that they would not thus tear down any truth.

That was a faith in the truth with which I had heretofore been entirely unacquainted. It promised no heavens beyond the grave, and I still had some misgivings as to how it could be used at funerals; but it not only promised but was actually performing a lot of things on earth. It was to this attitude toward truth, and not to the ecclesiastical attitude, that we owed our railroads. From science came sanitation and surgery and the thousand and one blessings which we have come to know as civilization. From the Church, on the other hand, came—what?

It was a question I dared not answer at the time. I was still a bishop. I loved the Church and I wanted, beyond everything, it seemed, to retain my faith in it; but I wanted just as eagerly to understand what was what. I wanted to feel that it was from the Church, not from science, that man had developed character; that it was from the Christian Church, at any rate, that he had developed tenderness and compassion and love for his fellow man. What would the world be to-day, I heard myself asking, if it were not for the Church?

Then I thought with a shudder of what the world actually was just then. This was 1914. Most of the Christian world, at any rate, was at war. Our own beloved country, to be sure, had not been drawn into it, and I understood that there was no possible chance that it would be. Under the banner of Christ, we would yet play the rôle of peacemaker; but the great Christian countries of Europe were all given over to hate.

Of course, I reflected, the Germans were wrong, and it was doubtless England's moral duty to punish them. But the Christianity of the nations on the

other side, at least, had not accomplished anything to brag about.

I did not go far with such ruminations. There had been nothing in my training to cause me to make any social application of Christian principles. Religion, I supposed, was a decidedly individual matter. Life was individual. Even here, as I was getting my first insight into modern science, what had overwhelmed me was its annihilation of my own personal gods.

The war, to be sure, did necessarily crowd into one's consciousness at times. But one did not *think* about it, as he thought about his own personal affairs. Even at this stage, had some one reminded me that the history of Christianity had been largely a history of wars, I do not think I could have caught the point. In those days I did not know the meaning of the word *social.* I did not know, of course, that I did not know it; for I used it very often. But with me, as with the average preacher of the time, the words *social* and *plural* were practically synonomous. The world, to us, was made up of individuals, and it was the business of each individual to be good, and to see that his own individual soul was saved. If enough people were thus individually redeemed, that was my notion of social redemption.

The persons in question, say, might be so many kings, so many millionaires, so many workingmen, so many slave-owners, so many slaves or so many soldiers; and after their redemption they would be good kings and millionaires and workingmen and slave-owners and slaves and soldiers, instead of the bad folks which they had been before. That would make the world about right. That would be the Kingdom of God on earth.

Darwin and the other scientists did not provide me with the social concept that I lacked. What they did, mostly, was to destroy all the concepts I had previously had; and since I was still a bishop, and since I was still all ready to leave this earth and migrate to a heaven which they had rendered nonexistent, I felt that it was plainly up to me to do something about it. I spent a good many months trying to think the thing through and eventually appealed to my fellow bishops for aid.

I wrote letters to all of them. I made a clean confession. I told them how I had felt myself slipping, how my old theological universe had crashed about me, and how impossible it seemed to reconcile this new knowledge with my ancient faith. This knowledge, I knew, was not all as new to them as it was to me. Would they help me? Would they tell me what a poor old retired bishop, under such circumstances, could do? I spoke especially, I remember, of my heaven that had so strangely vanished. Where did they think it was—they who had studied astronomy? Was it literally "up" above us? And after a soul had left this world behind, was there any particular direction which he could call "up"? And knowing what they did about the interplanetary temperatures, did they believe that our resurrected bodies could endure such a journey?

They were honest, I knew, and they were learned. If they did not believe in the creeds, they would say so. But how could they believe them? How could they reconcile all these simple, creedal statements with the known facts of modern science? As for myself, I admitted, I seemed totally unable to reconcile them. Unless they could help me, I must soon be lost.

VII

I FIND CHRIST—VIA KARL MARX

The replies from my fellow bishops were a considerable shock to me. Some of them did not answer at all. Others showed that they were not much interested. But neither of these things caused the shock. What shocked me was that those who labored hardest to save me had no help whatever to give. Before such simple questions as I had asked, the whole Church seemed bankrupt. One could retain his theological convictions, apparently, only by not inquiring into them at all.

Bishop Gailor, for whose learning and for whose earnestness I had the highest respect, advised me to read Kant. So I read Kant, and found him well worth reading, but I found him anything but orthodox. Just because one may well doubt his own logical deductions—and Kant seemed to furnish plenty of reasons why he should—one did not therefore necessarily swallow all the deductions which had been handed down to him. Kant might be all right as a critic of our mental processes, but as a bulwark of orthodoxy I had to give him a zero mark.

If orthodoxy had any bulwarks, in fact, none of the bishops knew where they were. At least, they did not tell me.

I do not blame them in the least. Their world had not been disturbed for them; and they were, of

course, unable to prescribe for a person whose universe had suddenly vanished.

I did not blame them at the time, but I pondered over their replies. I was quite ready to concede that I might be the old simpleton which some of those replies suggested. But what if I were? Was it not the Church's place to set old simpletons right?

And the Church, it began to dawn upon me, no matter how self-satisfied it might be, was appealing to a world which had been disturbed by this new way of looking at things. Rather, it was trying to make such an appeal and was not doing it. In spite of the old creeds, was not the whole world believing new things, and was it not acting daily upon its new beliefs?

It seemed impossible, when I came to think of it, to believe the old creeds and the new ones too. If there had been a possible reconciliation, would not some of the bishops have suggested one to me? And yet, if there were no reconciliation, how could the Church continue to exert an influence in the world as it was fast coming to be?

Not suddenly, this time, but after much groping and pain, another light began to break. It was not blinding. It was not even clear. It was just a faint gleam in the distance—an idea which no one, so far as I know, had ever suggested to me and which did not come from any of the scientific or theological books.

I did not, I know, give birth to this idea. It was born of the times in which I was living. I could catch only the faintest aspects of it, at first, but it gave me a thrill.

The idea, or the first faint aspect of it, was this:

that neither I, nor any one else, in these times, could be perfectly orthodox.

I had been as orthodox as it was possible for anybody to be. I had beaten the other bishops, in this respect, because I knew so much less than they. Some of them did not literally believe in hell, as a place, because they had come more or less in contact with astronomy, and by no mental effort could they give it a location. But heaven and hell had both been places to me, quite as vividly as God had been a person. And this was unquestionably the orthodox view.

But I, I reflected, with all my orthodoxy, did not believe that hell was under the earth; and I did not believe that devils came up out of it and bewitched human beings. I had preached such things, but not as literal facts. I had employed them as *symbols,* rather, of truths which I could not express literally.

With all my ignorance, I was an Episcopalian, not a Voodoo worshiper. I did not believe in witchcraft, and no one had insisted that I should. If any one had so insisted, I could not have done it anyway, because I was living in times in which the idea of witchcraft was impossible.

But how far could this principle of symbolic interpretation be carried? Suddenly, by the grace of Darwin, I had moved into times in which all my old theological literalism became impossible. Could I not go ahead with my studies, believing literally everything which I discovered to be literal truth, and interpreting symbolically every creedal statement which conflicted in any way, if literally interpreted, with any of the conclusions which I might happen to reach?

It was a daring suggestion, but I tried it out, and I was amazed at the way it worked.

I no longer believed in a personal God, nor in a six-day creation, nor in a literal heaven and hell. I had no reason, in fact, to assume a life beyond the grave, so I gave up that notion too. Positively, there had been no Fall of Man; and if there were no fall through Adam, there could not have been a redemption through the blood of the Second Adam or Christ.

This belief, however, was the very foundation of Christian theology. Could I give it up and still remain a Christian? Could the Sacraments have any meaning to me after I had become convinced, as I was, that their original meaning was no longer tenable?

I did not know, and so I found out by trying. I went to church; and in a Christian church I worshiped my now Unknown God. I made no intellectual concessions. I did not attempt to fool myself, and when I repeated the creeds I did not try to believe anything which I knew was not so. I simply interpreted those creeds symbolically.

Matter, Force and Law now seemed to me to be the Holy Trinity, God the All-in-All of Existence and Jesus the Light of the World—the painful human struggle by which knowledge is gained and our redemption is yet to be worked out.

My symbolism was crude. Had other worshipers known what I was doing, they would almost certainly have classed me as a heathen or a hypocrite.

I may have been a heathen, but I was not a hypocrite. I was absolutely honest, and somehow—explain it as you like—the services which I had always

loved now seemed to me to have more meaning than ever.

Just what value there is to the human soul in the acts of formal devotion, I do not now assume to say. I leave that subject for the psychologists to explore. I am simply relating a personal experience. I longed to worship; and whether that longing was due to some immaturity in my psychic make-up is just now irrelevant. The fact is that my new-found knowledge, or my new attitude toward the universe, had not taken that longing away. I longed to worship, and it had become impossible for me to worship in the way to which I had become accustomed, if it were necessary to give the same old intellectual valuation to the words which I used.

But I discovered that it was not necessary. I discovered more than that. I discovered that the services and the sacraments, instead of meaning less to me than they had meant before, meant more.

To me, it was a glorious discovery. I did not grasp its implications at the time; and if this had been all that happened, the world would never have heard of Bishop William Montgomery Brown. But to a tired old man who had suddenly lost his hope of heaven and his God, it meant almost everything to realize that he had not lost his religion, and that whatever sustaining power it had ever had was just as much his to-day as it ever was. Not only just as much, but more.

With this experience, my health somewhat revived. Presently, I began to get more interested in the world about me. Also, I felt the call to do something, and I set out to write one more book. It was to be a new apologetics. It was to give the world the

testimony of a Christian bishop who had lost his literal beliefs but had gained in spiritual comprehension.

I had nearly finished that book when I discovered that it would not do at all. It was the year 1917; and in 1917, you may remember, no American went on with anything which he had set out to do.

It was the War.

So long as the war remained over in Europe, it had seemed unnecessary for me to think about it. I could reflect, of course, that it was terrible and too bad; but so long as it was only burning up the rest of the world, and leaving the United States alone, we Americans found it possible to contemplate it with something of the Christian fortitude with which the elect view hell.

But now, in spite of the fact that we had elected a President for the specific reason that he had kept us out of it, it began to look very much as though we were sliding in.

You will remember that I myself was a war orphan of the Civil War. I hated war generally on religious principles, but I hated it much more fervently when it got into my personal vicinity. I had adjusted myself pretty well by this time to my loss of heaven and hell, but I became terribly upset at the thought of America going to war.

So I appealed to my fellow bishops again. To be sure, they had lost much of their prestige in my eyes, as far as matters in the next world were concerned, but they still retained their prestige in this. The Protestant Episcopal Church, as I still looked upon it, was our country's most respected religious group; and however invalid Christian dogmas might be

proved to be, the ethical leadership of the Church could not be questioned.

I, at least, did not question it; and if the bishops would only unite in a sufficiently clear pronouncement against the war, I had no doubt but that they could avert it.

So I wrote to them, urging them to take formal action against the war; especially to urge our government to hold off, in a Christian spirit, instead of insisting upon our rights. I found to my consternation that they were almost unanimously for the war. All but Paul Jones, Bishop of Utah, and he later lost his job because of his pacifism.

Is it possible, readers will probably ask, that any one could be so naïve at this time to suppose that a House of Bishops in America could exert such influence? Yes, it was possible. That is exactly how I felt about it. As I have explained, I did not in those days know the meaning of the word *social,* and I had not the slightest understanding of the forces which motivate society.

I was bewildered, desperate. I read the newspapers, especially the editorials, but they gave me no light. We slid into the war and nobody seemed to be doing anything to stop us. There were a few pacifist protests here and there but no one seemed to take them seriously, except to call the objectors pro-German and put them in jail.

One day I read a letter written to one of the papers by some one signing himself E. B., which referred to the "economic causes of war." To me that was a strange phrase. I thought that wars were fought for moral ideas, for democracy or the rights of small nations, or for the principle of human free-

dom or something like that. So I wrote to the editor, referring to the letter, and asked if the writer could give me any data to indicate that wars *had* an economic basis.

The writer of that letter proved to be a woman—Miss Ella Bronzelle. She answered me courteously, but I realize now what a boob she must have thought I was. She suggested that I get in touch with some Socialist and have him instruct me in the economic basis for social actions generally.

I was stumped again. I did not know any Socialists and I did not know what a Socialist was. But I got the address of *The Rip Saw,* a Socialist weekly of the time. I immediately sent two dollars to *The Rip Saw* and asked them to send me any pamphlet they might have which bore upon the question.

I never before received so much literature for two dollars. It was a whole armful but I read it all. And when I had finished that, I sent for more. Eventually I read *Capital,* by Karl Marx, a book and a writer of whom I had never heard before.

That was another revelation. It was as important a revelation in its way as the revelation of Darwin. It gave me my first clear view of human society. I do not mean by that that it left nothing to learn, but it left my individualism about where Darwin had left my heaven and my hell.

Darwin had made me believe in Evolution; he had made it necessary for me to believe in it, even though he seemed to rob me, for a time, of my last earthly hope. He had compelled me to accept Reality, wherever it led. He was inexorable, not merely in his logic—for logic, beginning nowhere, is quite likely to end nowhere too—but inexorable in his observa-

tion of what was actually happening; and he had compelled me to look to actual happenings for light. So I had turned to the God of Nature—desperately.

"Though he slay me," I had said like Job, "yet will I trust in him." I had to, for there were no actual happenings outside of Nature.

Marx accepted all this, but he showed me how it applied to human life. He showed me that we humans were not mere individuals, but members of groups and classes, unconsciously reacting to group and class motives. He showed me why there was no human brotherhood, but how, through an understanding of the social forces, the conflict between man and man might be brought to an end.

He did not supersede Darwin in my mind. He supplemented him. He came not to destroy Darwin but to fulfill. Darwin was now my Old Testament, Marx my New.

St. Karl, I know, would be moved to sardonic laughter if it were possible for him to read this narrative. I was undoubtedly, at this time, the strangest Marxist who had appeared on earth to date. But it was a very real experience for me, and a valid one. Instead of Marx destroying my Christian faith, he illuminated it as it had never been illuminated before.

I saw at once that I would have to rewrite that book which I had started. For I saw now that the story of Jesus was humanly true, and that it was the most vital truth of all human history.

But Jesus, in this new interpretation of him, was not a historical character. He was neither a mere god, the creature of some theologian's imagination, nor a mere good man who lived in Galilee under the

reign of the Cæsars and who was executed by bad people because he was so good.

Jesus now became a symbol to me of all the liberators of humanity who had been persecuted and crucified since the dawn of human times, by those who cared more for the preservation of institutions than for the liberation of humanity. He was the symbol, particularly, of the working class, the despised and disinherited of earth, through whose agony and blood all humanity had been sustained and through whose sacrifice it would yet be redeemed.

I had been most sincere in my old theology. I had been as sincere as it was possible for any one in modern times to be; accidentally protected, as I had been, from all contact with modern thought. The Jesus of the Gospels, I am sure, had been as real to me as he could have been to any other bishop; but Jesus, during all my orthodox days, was not as real as he was just now.

Marx, to be sure, had repudiated the Church and had declared that religion was the opiate of the masses. But he was speaking, it seemed to me, of theology, of an attitude toward life which fastened one's hopes upon an unreal world beyond the grave; and, in that respect, I now agreed with him most heartily.

But the Christ story, taken as a symbol, was a different matter. If so taken, it might be universally applied. Not only could I accept Christ in this way, I found, but I could also accept all the other so-called religions. There need be no further religious controversies. One could be a Christian and a Buddhist and a Free-thinker at the same time, providing the symbolism of Christianity and of Buddhism both

appealed to him and he stood ready to study actual happenings when he wished to find out what to think.

Well, I rewrote that book. I called it *Communism and Christianism*. It was as clear a statement as I could make at the time of this newly acquired point of view.

It is not strange, under the circumstances, that people found the book rather hard reading. Many of my best friends have told me since that I should have waited at least ten years before writing it. That, they explained, would have given my thoughts a chance to settle down: I could have organized my argument in better shape, made the presentation less shocking and commanded a more thoughtful attention to the central theme.

I could not have waited ten years if I had wished to, for I did not have ten years to wait. No one who knew me at that time would have given me more than two or three years to live. It was then or never, as far as I was concerned; but there was a special reason why I wanted it to be then.

I had become disgusted with the good old Episcopal practice of hiding one's thoughts. Bishops, generally, were no clearer than politicians; and it was impossible from what they said in public to discover what they really thought. This, at any rate, would be a clear-cut statement of my views. The views might not be clear but they would be my actual views. I might be wrong, but I would be honest; and if the views were shocking, I would let them shock.

I might, if I had been more discreet, have given the book another title. I might have called it *The*

Symbolic Aspects of Familiar Theological Conceptions, and suggested on the title-page that the Church should guard itself against a too narrow literalism if it expects to appeal successfully to the modern labor movement.

But I did not feel that way. What I actually put on the title-page was: "Banish Gods from the Skies and Capitalists from the Earth."

VIII

I AM FOUND GUILTY OF BEING INNOCENT

Communism and Christianism has now had a sale of about one hundred and seventy-five thousand copies. But for that I am not responsible. It was my fellow bishops who did it. The book, as a matter of fact, did not create as much of a stir as I had expected it to, until they began to damn it as heretical.

It got off to a good start—probably because of the title-page—but there were two things that kept it from making an immediate dent in current thinking. In the first place, *Communism and Christianism* made no hit at all with Christians. Secondly, it made no hit with Communists.

The Christians got as far, generally, as the discovery that the author did not believe in any supernatural God, or even in the historic existence of Jesus as a man; and contrasting this with his picture in full Episcopal regalia, and the fact that he still called himself a bishop, they concluded that he must be out of his mind and not worth reading.

The revolutionary readers—especially the Communists and I. W. W.'s—went a little further. But they soon discovered that the writer still went to church, still partook of the Sacrament and still believed in God and in Jesus—in some peculiar way which they were unable to distinguish from any other —and that usually ended their interest in him.

The very phrase "symbolic interpretation" had little meaning for Americans generally—inside the Church or out. One either "believed what the Church taught" or he did not. If he did, he was orthodox. If he did not, he either got out of the Church or stayed in and played the hypocrite.

That, at least, was the general understanding, but it was not the fact. As a matter of fact, in the Church and out, Americans were making a very sharp distinction between their literal and their symbolic beliefs.

They believed in the sunrise, for instance, quite as vividly and quite as thoroughly as the ancients ever did; nevertheless, they knew that the sun did not rise. They were interested in Hamlet, as a symbol of human life under certain limitations, but were utterly unconcerned as to whether such a person ever lived in history or not. They loved their country, and sang hymns to their native "land," although they were well aware that the *land* did not hear them.

Even I, who had been the most extreme literalist, had always interpreted some clauses of the Creed symbolically. When I declared my belief that Jesus "sitteth on the right hand of God," I did not believe that God had hands. The word *hand* was only a symbol to me; but when I say "only a symbol," I do not mean that it had less meaning than it would have had if I had taken it literally. It had more.

The word *God* had now become a symbol; but instead of my belief being destroyed, this change from the literal to the symbolic interpretation had made belief possible. It enriched my belief, for I could now believe with my eyes open. I did not have to hide any longer from the truth. I could learn any-

thing that I could learn, and I need not be scared any longer from any line of inquiry lest I might discover something incompatible with my creed.

But all this was lost for the time upon readers of *Communism and Christianism*. About all that the average reader, either clergyman or atheist, got, was that a bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church, still in good standing and a member of the House of Bishops, did not believe in any personal God, nor in any life beyond the grave, nor in Jesus Christ, either as a supernatural being or as a character in history.

Even my closest friends in the Church deserted me now. Only Mrs. Brown, it seemed, stood by me. I shall say no more than that at this point; except to call attention to the fact that, in this whole strange, historic episode which, it seems to me, has marked an epoch in religious history, there was no hero. But there was a heroine.

There was not even a leader. Most certainly, I played no such rôle. All that I did was to spill the beans. I, a life-long professor of supernaturalism, had discovered, almost on my death-bed, that there was nothing in it. I had seriously believed in supernaturalism, and the discovery had floored me; and when I came to and got my bearings, I realized that it was time some one did speak plainly.

Heretofore, no one had done so, either because he was economically dependent, and could not do so, or so tied up politically with the ecclesiastical organization that he did not dare. But I was economically and politically independent. I had retired and I would soon be dead. It required no heroism, then, for me to do what I did; and it was not necessary,

even if I had had the ability, which I had not, to assume the leadership of any movement. All that was necessary, I thought, was to speak out, precipitate the discussion, which could end in only one way, and die.

But the discussion did not come. That is, there was very little discussion of the subject-matter of my book.

Within the Church, I soon learned, there was some discussion. This, however, was not about the book but about me. Should I be tried for heresy, or should the matter be allowed to blow over? Some bishops were in favor of purging the Church of my presence at once; others argued that this would involve the Church in a lot of unpleasant publicity, and it would be best under the circumstances not to take official cognizance of my crime.

Outside the Church, the main question was: "Why does he not get out?"

One may imagine that I felt lonely. There was a flare of publicity, but even that was hushed. The newspaper articles seemed to hint that I was a queer case. I made some friends among the radicals, but many of them seemed to be patronizing me. They thought, it seemed, that I was a nice old duffer, and I tried to measure up to this good opinion. Nevertheless, Mrs. Brown and I felt very much alone.

All my adult life, while I was a mere cog in the ecclesiastical machine, gullibly swallowing the most fantastic notions of life as sacred truth, and fervently preaching doctrines which nobody could live by, I had been received everywhere with homage and respect; but now that I had done a little independent thinking I was generally shunned; and where

I was not shunned, I was looked upon with amused tolerance as a person who still loved the Church, although, in other respects, he seemed quite enlightened.

But this situation did not last very long. The demand became more insistent that I be tried for heresy; and with that demand, there came a demand for my book. After all, if I were to be tried for it, it must be taken seriously: and here and there, I learned from letters which came pouring in, was a reader who seemed to get my drift.

These letters were not from Modernists—the Modernist-Fundamentalist controversy was just getting into full swing. The Modernists generally were anxious that their cause should not be confused with the freak ideas set forth by Bishop Brown. The Modernists simply wanted a liberal attitude toward the creeds while I, they maintained, had rejected the very foundations of the Christian religion.

From their point of view, I think, they were right. The Fundamentalists believed literally in many supernaturalistic ideas. The Modernists believed only a few. I rejected supernaturalism entirely.

In their controversy, I sympathized with the Fundamentalists. I believed the Fundamentalists were all wrong; but since they accepted supernaturalism as the basis of religion, I believed they were quite right in criticizing the Modernists for their refusal to go all the way.

The Modernists went only half way, and they criticized me because I would not go half way. They rejected one half of Fundamentalism while I rejected

both halves: so my case annoyed them, if possible, more than it annoyed the Fundamentalists.

I was not tried immediately, but it was not the Modernists who prevented it. It was the Opportunists. At the General Convention in Portland, in 1921, the bishops decided against a formal trial but appointed a committee to talk with me and secure, if possible, my voluntary resignation.

The reason for not trying me, as hinted to the newspapers, was that I was crazy.

For some reason or other this decision did not please me. Perhaps if it had come a little before it did I should have made no protest. I did not believe that I was crazy, but I had seemed to be in such a hopeless minority that I might have despaired of convincing any one. But the decision had come after the book had begun to receive a serious reading, and from scientists throughout the country, if not from religionists, I had been seriously congratulated.

I might be a heretic, I reasoned. It may be that a refusal to believe in supernaturalism—either in the Fundamentalist whole or the Modernist half of it—rightly debars me from any position in the Church. If so, it can be determined by a trial of the issues involved. But such a refusal does not constitute insanity. If it does, the leaders in almost all branches of modern science must be recognized as insane.

I did not want to be tried. I was ill, for one thing, and felt that I had not the physical endurance to cope with it. Nevertheless, I had challenged the bishops to try me. While the ordeal might kill me, I felt, it would force the Church to pass upon the issues I had raised.

Now the Church had dodged it by hinting that I was irresponsible. To me, this did not seem fair. It did not seem fair either to me or to the Church. My only break with the ecclesiastical order was my claim that it insisted upon beliefs which could not be substantiated: in other words, that the Church was running away from the facts. And the Church had now answered this criticism by running away from it.

I still believed in the Church, and I do yet. But such tactics, I felt, would render it useless in the modern world.

The Church was losing its leadership. No one seemed to dispute that; but the Modernists generally blamed the Fundamentalists for this, while the Fundamentalists blamed the Modernists.

It was my notion, correct or not, that the Church's big handicap was its supernaturalism. The world it was trying to reach, in America at any rate, could no longer accept supernaturalism as a guide to living and therefore could not look to the Church for any real leadership in life.

It could still accept the Church's leadership at funerals. People could still get into moods at times, when it seemed that this world of sin and woe was only a preparation for heaven; but those moods were becoming less and less frequent; and besides that, they did not do any good anyway.

I thought the Church was off the track. Its wheels were still going around, but it was not getting anywhere. It still had power, however. It had plenty of steam and the machinery was in fairly good condition, although it was increasingly hard to induce the world to support it when it was not serving any discoverable human purpose, except to save souls from

a hell which nobody longer believed in to a heaven which was becoming more and more problematical.

I was ready, if necessary, to be declared a heretic for this diagnosis. I was ready, even, to be put out of the Church, much as I loved it and much as I believed, not only in the institution, but in its personnel. I believed in the bishops, and I do still, both in their integrity and their intelligence; and if they had tried me for heresy and found me guilty, I should have accepted their verdict without criticism.

I should not have agreed with it, but I should have deferred to their verdict; for whether my views were scientifically sound or not, they after all were the rightful judges of my churchmanship.

But they were not the rightful judges of my sanity. And when this committee came to "confer" with me —to make a deal, as I felt, with a man whom it wished to have the world think crazy—I refused to see them.

Up to this time I had had no counsel or advice. I was not angry at the bishops, but I wanted if possible to force the issue; and a committee of bishops, presenting their unanimous opinion that I was of unsound mind, might keep the issue from having any hearing.

And so I asked them to send a committee of alienists instead.

I agreed, in fact, to leave the question of my sanity to the heads of the departments of psychology in Harvard, Yale and Columbia universities, although I was not acquainted with the men and did not know who they were.

The offer was not accepted. As far as the Church was concerned, it was generally thought that the in-

cident was closed. But *Communism and Christianism,* in the meantime, had been translated into Russian and was being circulated extensively by Communists in Russia, possibly not because they had become converted to my churchmanship, but because the word of a bishop was likely to carry weight in that country among certain elements of the population whom they wished to reach. The Church in Russia was still strongly Tsarist.

Protestant Episcopal leaders in this country soon began to receive communications from Russia.

"Is this man a bishop in good standing in the Church, as it is alleged?" "Is he still a member of the House of Bishops?" "What action, if any, has been taken against him?" This was the burden of the inquiry from worried Russian prelates.

What answers they received I do not know. It is possible that they were informed that I was just a crazy old man, and that it did not matter; but if so, the inquirers were not satisfied.

In the meantime, the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy raged hotly in America; and newspapers and magazines, which had traditionally avoided all references to religious differences, began to investigate what it was all about. Reporters frequently dropped in on me. I found them surprisingly open minded; and to the extreme annoyance of many Modernists, my views were often quoted along with theirs. The reporters, evidently, refused to assume that I was crazy until they had some evidence to that effect.

Then Theodore Schroeder, the famous New York psychologist, came to visit me. He told me frankly that his visit was prompted by curiosity, but he was

more than welcome. We became fast friends. The psychological aspects of the case had hitherto escaped me; but Mr. Schroeder's analysis played a great part in subsequent developments.

One day, Charles W. Wood, a New York newspaper man, came to Galion.

"I want to see how crazy you are," he told me; and he subsequently wrote an article on the subject for *Hearst's International Magazine*. Mr. Wood and I have been close friends ever since. In that article, he put the situation in a nutshell.

" 'They said I was a heretic,' " he quoted me as saying, " 'and I asked them why they did not try me for heresy.' "

" 'Because you are crazy,' they replied."

" 'And what makes you think I am crazy?' "

" 'Your heresies,' they said."

IX

I OFFER TO PLEAD GUILTY, IF—

The world presently began to seem more friendly, although, at the same time, hostilities were becoming much more definite. There had been nothing hostile in that allegation that I was crazy. But to me there was something very chilly in it. It was not a bona fide allegation, but a cold, ecclesiastical way of expressing warm, Christian fellowship; by which the Christians hoped to get all the credit for the fellowship while their victim got no recognition at all.

I much preferred direct hostility; and when my brethren, stirred up by the Russian Church or by the Wood article or whatnot, began now to attack me openly, I loved them for it. I was especially pleased when the House of Bishops, meeting in Dallas, in 1923, appointed a committee to frame charges against me. This was hostile, but straightforward.

On the other hand, I found myself making many new friends. I had never realized before how warm the fellowship of human minds could be. My book was not merely circulating but was being read. Few agreed with it entirely, but many were recognizing it as a sure-enough point of view.

"Half-baked science" was the commonest criticism. But this criticism came mostly from preachers, sometimes from those who had unreservedly praised

The Church for Americans. Scientists, on the other hand, surprised me by the generosity of their criticism. I was well aware that I had had no scientific training, and that I had not presented my theme as a scientist would have done. But scientists like the late Luther Burbank liked my theology immensely, and this more than atoned to me for the way the theologians disliked my science.

One theologian, a Modernist, came out flatly in my defense. This was the Reverend Arthur E. Whatham, of Louisville, Kentucky, a clergyman of the Protestant Episcopal Church and a recognized wizard in scholarship.

Doctor Whatham began his theology where the average bishop left off. I never knew, until I talked with him, that there was so much theology in the world. Symbolism was no news to him. He traced the idea back to Origen and proved from a thousand citations, from the Holy Fathers down to Dean Inge, that my right to reinterpret the creeds could not be questioned. The man almost convinced *me,* in fact, that I was orthodox.

When I was finally brought to trial, Doctor Whatham became my theological adviser. He was certain that, if I would leave the matter to him, he could prove my innocence. I thought this quite likely, myself; but I was not anxious, by that time, to be acquitted on theological technicalities. Doctor Whatham's argument, I felt, might appeal to theologians, but it would leave the general confusion concerning the issues about where it was.

And so, to his great disappointment, I insisted upon a totally different line of defense. But this never alienated Doctor Whatham. He stood by me

loyally throughout the whole case, although he was never given a chance to present it as he thought it should be presented, and in spite of the fact that he did not agree with me in my social and economic theories at all.

It was in February, 1924, that I received a copy of the "presentment," or indictment, commanding me to appear before a Court of Bishops to answer the charge of "holding and publishing views contrary to the doctrine of the Protestant Episcopal Church."

The presentment was signed by the Right Reverend Arthur C. A. Hall, Bishop of Vermont, the Right Reverend Joseph M. Francis, Bishop of Indianapolis, and the Right Reverend William L. Gravatt, Bishop of West Virginia. It contained twenty-three citations from *Communism and Christianism,* each of which was alleged to be contrary to the doctrines set forth in the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer, and especially in the Apostles' and the Nicene creeds. I give the quotations herewith, so that readers who are familiar with the creeds may reach their own conclusion as to whether or not they seem to verge on heresy.

1. On page 22: Within the social realm, humanity is my new divinity, and your divinity (my old one) is a symbol of it, or else, as I think, he is at best a fiction and at worst a superstition.

2. On pages 32 and 33: Neither capitalism nor Christianism is anything, except in so far as it is a system of parasitism and as parasitic systems they have striking resemblances, nearly as many and as close as indistinguishable twins. . . . Both have gods, churches and priesthoods, and these are in each case nothing but

symbols. . . . However, the god of capitalism, though only a symbol, is nevertheless real gold, below a real vault, and nearly all the world sincerely worships it. . . . But the God of Christianism, though none the less symbolic, but rather more so, is an unreal, imaginary spirit, a magnified man without a body, above an imaginary vault, and only a very small part of the world sincerely worships him.

3. On page 51: Orthodox Christians say that Jesus founded their sectarian churches, though each sect insists that he had to do with only one church, theirs. I doubt that he lived.

4. On page 61: Do you not now see with me that the Christ of the world is not a conscious, personal god but an unconscious, impersonal machine? It is to the machine of man, not lamb of god, to which we may hopefully look for the taking away of the sins of the world.

5. On page 78: The world's savior god is knowledge. There is no other Christ on earth or in any heaven above it, and this one lives, moves and has his being in the fear of ignorance.

6. On page 81: Omar, the poetic astronomer, might have added a quatrain which would have closed, "I myself am God." This is, in effect, what Jesus did say: "I and my Father are one." This is as true of you and me and of every man, woman and child as it was of Jesus.

7. On page 81: Gods in the skies (Jesus, Jehovah, Allah, Buddha) are all right as subjective symbols of human potentialities and attributes of natural laws, even as the Stars and Stripes on a pole, Uncle Sam in the Capitol and Santa Claus in the sleigh are all right as such symbols; but such gods are all wrong, if regarded as objective realities existing independently of those who created them as divinities and placed them in celestial habitations.

8. On page 82: So far I have not found it necessary to renounce the Christian God or any of the things which go with him and I have no idea of doing this, any more than I have of renouncing the American Uncle Sam and the things which go with him, but I place the Brother Jesus of the Christian religion and the Uncle Sam of the American politics on the same footing with each other and with others of their kind as objective realities. I could be a Jew and an Englishman as conscientiously as a Christian and an American.

9. On page 89: As an objectivity there is no such divinity (meaning thereby the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit). He is a subjectivity existing in the imaginations of orthodox Christians.

10. On page 90: The one God of the Jews and the triune God of the Christians, if taken seriously, are superstitions.

11. On page 91: The Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world is the sign of the zodiac, Aries—sheep, ram—through which the sun passes toward the end of March, when all the savior gods annually died and rose again.

12. On page 91: Jehovah is the sun myth rewritten to fit in with the ideals of the owning, master class of the Jews. Jesus is the sun myth rewritten to fit in with the ideals and hopes of the owning, master class of the Christians.

13. On page 92: The Holy Ghost sees to it that the slave class is kept in ignorance.

14. On page 101: The birth, death, descension, resurrection and ascension of all the savior gods, not excepting Jesus, are versions of the sun myth.

15. On page 102: There is no reason for believing that any one among the gods of the four old supernaturalistic interpretations of religion (Jesus, Jehovah, Allah, Buddha) or that either of the gods of the two new interpretations by the renowned physicist, Sir Oliver

Lodge, and the distinguished sociologist, Mr. H. G. Wells, has had more to do in creating, sustaining and governing this world than another; that is to say, there is no ground for believing that the personal, conscious gods in the skies, either individually or collectively, have had anything at all to do with it.

16. On page 106: There is no rational doubt about the fictitious character of the divine Jesus.

17. On page 106: The gods of all the supernaturalistic interpretations of religion are so many creations of the dominant or master class; and their revelations were put into their mouths by their makers for the purpose of keeping the slave class ignorant and contented.

18. On page 114: My god, Nature, is a triune divinity—matter being the father, force the son and law the spirit.

19. On page 115: My god, Nature, the triune divinity—matter, force and motion—the doings of which god are so many words of the only gospel upon which the salvation of the world is to any degree dependent, is an impersonal, unconscious, non-moral being.

20. On page 126: I ceased to believe in the existence of a conscious, personal divinity. Of course, my faith in the existence of a spiritual world and hope for a future life in it went with the god.

21. On pages 146 and 147: If you ask whether I am still a professing Christian, I shall answer: Yes, yet the Brother Jesus of the New Testament, Catholic creed and Protestant confessions, is not for me an historical personage, but only a symbol of all that is for the good of the world, even as the Uncle Sam of American literature is not an historical personage but only a symbol of all which is for the good of the United States.

22. On page 154: From the viewpoint of the self-styled 100 per cent. Christian, I am a betrayer of Brother Jesus, because I do not believe that he ever had any existence as a god and that, if he was at any

time a man, the world does not now and never can know of one thing that he did or of one word that he said.

23. On page 155: However, though I love my Brother Jesus and Uncle Sam all the time, as the child does Santa Claus at Christmas time, I am no longer childish enough at any time to look to either of them to do anything for me, because I know that what is done for me must be done either by myself or by men, women and children, and that as objective, conscious personalities, my Brother Jesus and Uncle Sam have had no more to do with my life than the man in the moon.

As I studied the citations in this presentment, I frankly confessed that they did seem to verge on heresy. They not only seemed heretical, but they seemed very heretical; in fact, they seemed *most* heretical, and if anybody could be convicted of heresy, I reflected, it should be very easy to convict me.

But what was heresy?

The good bishops did not need to remind me that all the foregoing statements were completely at variance with the words of the Prayer Book, if it were necessary for an Episcopalian to interpret those words literally.

But I no longer found this necessary. That, in fact, was what the book was all about. Once, I had supposed that a literal interpretation was the only interpretation that could be given, and I was so exceedingly orthodox that my more highly educated brethren used to smile at me indulgently. But this attitude, while it brought me honors in the Church, had cut me off from all reality. The world which

I was trying to influence paid no attention to it.

That world had not fought my orthodoxy. It had simply set it aside, for use at funerals, going elsewhere for guidance in all matters in which any real guidance was possible.

Now I had lost my orthodoxy. Not one shred of it was left. But instead of losing my religion, I had had what seemed to me the greatest religious experience of my life. My mind had been set free to cope with the realities. I even began to worship Reality—calling it God; and to worship the Son of Man, wherever I found him, not inquiring into his theological conclusions but only seeing that he was despised and persecuted and disinherited and Real.

If the purpose of the Church was to conduct funerals properly, and to see that everybody believed the particular Episcopalian dogmas which would land them at last in an Episcopalian heaven, then I had no further business in the Church. But this I had come to doubt; and it seemed to me that dear Bishops Hall and Francis and Gravatt must doubt it too. Outsiders, like Clarence Darrow, might believe it; and in order to remain honest they had had to become outsiders. But I could not believe that the Church, in 1924, would plead guilty to any such charge. In spite of my rejection of all orthodoxy, I felt, it would discover when it came to try the issues that it could not make a person's orthodoxy the test of his churchmanship.

The fact that I was more unorthodox than any churchman had ever professed to be only confirmed this conviction. For the question would immediately arise: How unorthodox can a churchman be? That he must accept every clause in the Prayer Book lit-

erally, no one would maintain, for even the bishops who were presenting me for trial could not do that.

So it was with mingled feelings of sadness and satisfaction that I received the presentment. I was sad because of the attitude which I knew must underlie the presentation. For the time being, I must appear as a criminal in my brethren's eyes. They hated, I knew, to do what they were doing, and they were moved only by a stern sense of duty to the Church and to humanity and to God.

They were good men and honest men. It hurt them to have me act in the way I had been acting. On the other hand, while I was possibly not so good as they, there could be no question that I was just as honest; and it hurt me, too, to have them act in the way they had been acting.

Only, I had the advantage of them. I could see, as I knew they could not, how it would all end. At least, I thought I could; and I pictured in my mind the surprised look that would come over them when they were at last compelled to face the issue squarely and, having once faced it, began to see what it was all about. I would admit at the outset that, if it were necessary to accept the statements of the creeds literally, I was the biggest heretic on earth. But then I would show them that no one could accept them literally—that even they themselves could not do so.

I might be *more* heretical than they, but that would be immaterial. Having once perceived that everybody in these days had to be a heretic, heresy would no longer be an issue in the Church. The Church, then, would be freed, as I had been freed, to cope with the realities. There would be no further conflict between its attitude and the attitude

of inquiring minds everywhere; also, there would be no conflict between church and church, nor between Christianity and any of the so-called non-Christian religions.

I felt elated, as I thought it all over, that I had not done as my cautious friends would have had me do, and waited ten years to write my book; and that I had been shocking, instead of being sweet and plausible, in the presentation of my views. Had I written the other kind of book, I realized, it would have brought about no vital change; but now that the Church had to pass officially on the fundamental principles involved, everybody would have to think about them and the whole atmosphere would immediately be cleared.

There was just one way in which I felt mean. While I was teaching the Church this lesson, I would also be putting it to no end of embarrassment. It had embarrassed me, to be sure, but that was out of sheer misunderstanding. I understood how it would all come out, if the trial were called and the issues squarely faced; and I did not want to have thoughtless people congratulating me and laughing merrily at my accusers.

So I decided that there need be no trial after all. There need be no show of hostility and no unnecessary publicity.

The Court to try me had been appointed, and I addressed a letter to its President, Bishop Murray, suggesting an alternative. Let us get together informally, I said, my prosecutors and I, and have a talk; and let the bishops draw up a statement of their supernaturalistic beliefs. Let them agree upon the particular supernatural doctrines an Episcopal

clergyman must subscribe to literally; and I will either subscribe to it, I promised, or plead guilty to the charge of heresy and resign from the Church.

The bishops refused. There was nothing to do but stand trial.

X

THE BISHOPS BALK AT THE CATECHISM

The charge against me was heresy; but whether I was a heretic or not depended entirely on what heresy was. If it were necessary to accept the Creeds literally, I was. If a churchman could accept them symbolically, I was not; for the Creeds now meant more to me than they had ever meant before, even in my most orthodox days.

Technically, the charge against me was that of "holding and publishing views contrary to the doctrines of the Protestant Episcopal Church." That involved the question: What is the doctrine of the Church?

The Prayer Book did not tell. It set forth a long list of "I believes," but it was utterly silent as to how these statements must be believed. In no trial in history, so far as any of us knew, had the question ever come up.

Once upon a time, concededly, the saints held these beliefs literally. They believed literally, not only in heaven and hell, but they believed that heaven was above the earth and hell below it. Incidentally, in perfect accordance with the general belief of the times, they thought the earth was flat.

But my fellow bishops did not believe the earth was flat, and I felt sure that they did not believe that hell was down below it. Some of them, as I

understood, did not believe literally in all the miracles recorded in the Old Testament, accepting them only as allegory and folk-lore, much as I now accepted the story of Jesus in the New Testament.

According to the Prayer Book, however, the "Holy Scriptures" were set forth as the only standard of doctrine; and the only way, apparently, in which one could defend his beliefs against the charge of heresy was by reference to them. But the Holy Scriptures again were silent on the only point involved in my trial.

I now believed the Holy Scriptures as I had never been able to believe them before. I had once believed that they were dictated to Moses and others by a personal God: now I believed that they had evolved out of man's contacts with man. And man to me was holy, and his efforts to become aware of his universe were holy efforts. His Scriptures, then, were holy to me, in a much more practical sense than they had formerly been, for my former concept of their holiness had only kept me from entering with my fellows into this holy search for truth, while with my present concept there was no such inhibition.

I could not only "Search the Scriptures," but I could search the universe from which men extracted those Scriptures, and I could learn truths of which they were wholly unaware. I could believe in those men of the past, therefore, as I had not been able to believe in them before. I could believe in their inspiration; for I was letting them inspire me to go on, as they had gone on from the darker ages before them, instead of permitting them to hold me back to the level of the knowledge which they had been able to achieve.

There was a difference, I admit, between this idea of holiness and the idea I held when I was Bishop of Arkansas; for I could do something with this holiness and I could do nothing whatever with the other.

I was not averse, then, to proving my case by the Scriptures. The only question was whether I must treat those Scriptures as though they were literal findings of fact, beyond which human knowledge must not go.

But that, under the circumstances just then, did not seem to be a very troublesome question. For none of the bishops, I knew, no matter how much of supernaturalism they were able to summon up when they repeated the Creeds, did or could interpret all the Scriptures literally.

If the Scriptures, then, were to be the sole standard of faith employed, I need not fear the verdict; for I would either be acquitted or all the bishops of the Church must be found guilty.

Under the laws of the Church, I discovered, I might be represented by an attorney, but the lawyer must be a member in good standing in the Protestant Episcopal Church. My personal attorney, and the man I naturally wanted to have conduct the defense, was a Presbyterian. This was Edward Bushnell, of Cleveland. He was, and is, a staunch conservative and had no sympathy whatever with my Socialist views. But he knew that I was honest and that, in my own way, I believed the Creeds and believed in the Bible from cover to cover.

Unless the Church should set forth a particular way in which these things should be believed, Mr. Bushnell readily perceived that it could not maintain a charge of heresy against me. He could not

act as my attorney, but he threw himself and his great talents into the case, acting as counsel for my attorney throughout, with an enthusiasm which surprised me.

But with all his conservatism, Mr. Bushnell's confidence in the Church was not as naïve as mine. He knew that I was not primarily interested in an acquittal, and that all I wanted was an honest ruling on the issue I had raised. To get such an honest ruling from a Court of Bishops did not seem to me to be a difficult job; but Mr. Bushnell, though much more orthodox than I, was much less sanguine.

Joseph W. Sharts, of Dayton, became my attorney. This was a great piece of luck: at one time I would have called it a special ruling of Providence. I knew Mr. Sharts and I knew his great record in the Socialist movement. One of the most able lawyers in the state, he had consistently refused to use his abilities in the conventional ways of money making but had sacrificed everything in the defense of "class-war prisoners"—Conscientious Objectors, I. W. W.'s and Socialists.

Somehow, it had never occurred to me that Mr. Sharts could by any possibility be an Episcopalian. He was not the type. I discovered, however, that he had been confirmed in the Church, but in later life had found it impossible to accept its dogmas literally. He had no quarrel, however, with my interpretation of those dogmas, and he came into the case with double enthusiasm: working not only to liberate the world from superstition but to liberate the Church from the dead literalism which was causing the most earnest and most religious people everywhere to leave it.

The issue seemed clear to all of us. I was to be tried for heresy by a Church which officially recognized the Holy Scriptures as its doctrine. I believed in those Scriptures, from cover to cover, if I were permitted to interpret them in my way; but I did not believe in the supernaturalism of the Bible, if it were necessary to accept it literally.

Must I accept it literally? That was the question, and it was a question which had never been brought up before in all church history. The early Church, however, had so accepted it. The Fathers had so accepted it, and the formulators of the Creeds which were interwoven in our ritual had so accepted it. All that could be said on the other side was that *nobody so accepted it to-day.*

At least, no educated clergyman did, and our church particularly prided itself on having an educated clergy. None of the bishops did—neither those on the Court which was to hear my case, nor the ones who had presented me for trial.

Since nobody could accept this literal interpretation of the Bible, it was unthinkable to me that I should be required to accept it. But how could we prove that nobody could accept it? There was obviously just one way, and that was out of their own mouths.

We thought at first that we would put all the bishops on the stand, but there was no way of compelling them to come, for the Church had no civil authority. So we decided to take their testimony by mail and received the permission of the Church Advocate to do this; but when he saw what we were really up to he hastily withdrew this permission. So we tried to get an order from the Presiding Bishop

permitting such an interpellation, but the Presiding Bishop referred the matter to the Court, which had not yet assembled and could not pass upon the point until it did.

It seemed plain then that we would not actually go to trial on the date set. For our defense was to rest upon the testimony of leading churchmen which as yet we had no authority to get. That authority could be given only when we came to trial; and I was confident that the Court would not ask me to go on with the trial when, because of circumstances over which I had no control, it would be impossible for me to present my defense.

However, we drew up the list of questions which we intended to put to the bishops and other leading spokesmen of the Church.

There were more than four hundred questions, but they were all strictly to the point. The first eighty-one were devoted to discovering the doctrine of the Church concerning the twenty-three passages of *Communism and Christianism* which had been cited as heretical. Especially they sought to find out if it was the doctrine of the Church that all its doctrine be accepted literally.

I quote one sample: "What is the doctrine of the Church on the question whether gods in the skies are objective realities rather than subjective symbols of human potentialities and attributes, and of natural laws?" And another: "If the phrase 'Lamb of God' may properly be taken in a symbolic sense only, is it not equally permissible to accept the phrase 'Son of God' in a symbolic sense only?"

Three hundred and twenty-seven of the questions had to do with literal belief in the Scriptures. Did

the bishops believe literally that God made the world in six days; that he rested on the seventh; that Eve was made out of Adam's rib; that Noah took two or more of every living thing of all flesh into the ark; that God came down to see the city and the tower of Babel, and was alarmed lest its top reach to heaven; that God ordained that no witch should be suffered to live; that God ordained if one's brother, son, daughter, wife or friend secretly suggested serving other gods, one should kill him without pity; or, coming to the New Testament, that Jesus walked on the water or cast devils out of a man, which devils then entered into a herd of swine?

We knew without asking, of course, that the bishops generally did not believe these things literally. Once upon a time, all bishops did; but that was when the human mind was still so organized that most of the phenomena of life were easily accounted for as the work of devils and gods and spirits performing their various stunts of magic. But something had happened to the mind of the world since them. Magic was going out. Science was coming in. To accept these stories literally now was an intellectual feat of which no modern mind was capable.

I could do so while I was Bishop of Arkansas, but that was because I did not think about them. Had they ever been brought to my attention so that I could not help thinking about them, I must have lost my orthodoxy then; or else, like William Jennings Bryan, when Clarence Darrow compelled him to face such questions, I must have died.

But I did not think about anything in those days; that is, about the fundamentals of anything. Like

Mr. Bryan, again, I was too busy. My mind was completely occupied with building churches: as to what purpose they were actually serving, if any—that to me was not a subject for thought. It was something to be taken for granted. I was doing it because God told me to. That is, I was following the ruts made by an institution and calling those ruts the way of God.

When I was jarred out of those ruts, as I told you, and began to see that they were only ruts, I was shocked and frightened. If that was not the way of God, I naturally wanted to know what was. God did not tell me, so I had to look around for myself. When I demanded, in fact, that God make himself clear, God cleared out.

I eventually arrived at a position which shocked all my colleagues. That I was ready to admit. But the charge against me was heresy, not shock; and they, I now perceived, had inevitably become heretics as well as I. They had not arrived at any shocking conclusions, for they had not left the rut of the institution, but they had left the rut of orthodoxy, and I was determined now, and also thoroughly equipped, to make them see this shocking truth.

But they, it seems, were determined not to let me give them any such shock.

The trial was set for May 24, 1924, in Trinity Cathedral, Cleveland. It was in this same cathedral, by strange coincidence, that I was consecrated to the bishopric a quarter of a century before; and it was in the church which had now become Trinity Cathedral that I was baptized and confirmed and later consecrated to the ministry. I was glad that this had happened. The Cathedral was full of precious memo-

ries; but nothing in all those associations was more sacred to me than the work which was about to be undertaken there. I was about to participate, I felt, in the liberation of the Church from superstition—from the one influence which was strangling it and preventing it from doing the great work which all of us, prosecutors and judges and defendants alike, were most anxious to have it do.

I was sorry that we were not ready for trial. The time and the place were just right and my health, I felt, would stand it. I could never tell when my heart would go back on me, and an adjournment date might find me on my back in bed or, as I had been given to believe was likely to happen at any time, beyond the reach of all courts and tribunals.

But there we were, without our defense, and we could not obtain it without an order from this Court. We could not summon the bishops to come and we could not command them to answer those four hundred questions. The only witnesses we had with us were Doctor Whatham, the theologian, Theodore Schroeder, the psychologist, and Colonel Emory S. West, retired, of the United States Army, who had made a considerable study of religious myths and was prepared to prove, by chapter and verse, that the Virgin Birth, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection and many other myths now supposed to be monopolized by Christianity were familiar properties of many other religions of the East hundreds and thousands of years before the alleged birth of Christ.

When we arrived in Cleveland, however, we heard strange tidings. The trial was to go on, we were told by the newspaper men, and it was to be all over the first afternoon.

"Bishop Brown is the only man on trial," they quoted the Church Advocate, Charles L. Dibble, as saying, "and the orthodoxy of any other bishop has nothing to do with the case."

Of course I could not believe that this expressed anything more, at most, than the hopes of an enthusiastic advocate. I could not think that Mr. Dibble had any foundation for his belief that our defense would not be heard. To be sure, I was the only one on trial; but it could not be that the bishops would permit me to be found guilty of heresy, by any standard whatever, unless they were ready to apply the same standard to themselves.

I soon discovered, however, that the newspaper men were right. They knew more about the way of the episcopate than I did. There was to be no trial, and there was no trial. The bishops had come there, I learned, not to measure my orthodoxy by any standard of measurement, but to find me guilty by the handy expedient of applying no standard at all.

Their guess was wrong in only one particular. The proceedings, they figured, would be all over that afternoon, which was fairly good figuring since they did not intend to permit any defense. Nevertheless, they lasted five days. There was no trial, but there was a rollicking ecclesiastical comedy.

XI

DOCTRINE, DOCTRINE—WHO'S GOT THE DOCTRINE?

Picture a ring of eight bishops in full Episcopal regalia, sitting on a dais at one end of the Cathedral hall, the soft rays from the stained-glass windows enhancing the medieval setting, and down below them a sick old heretic whose fate they were about to seal.

It was to be a ceremony, not a trial, for none of the judges, none of the onlookers, not even the heretic nor his attorneys had the slightest doubt by this time as to what the verdict would be. The old chap was to be declared guilty that afternoon and then led out into the place of execution a few blocks away, where his feeble old limbs would be strapped to a post, fagots would be piled about him, the torch would be applied and his flesh would quiver in agony while the worshipful crowd looked on. He would yell for mercy then, no doubt, but it would be too late; and his voice itself would soon be drowned by the crackling of the flames. After that—silence, and the knowledge that, however agonizing the experience might be to him, it was only a taste of what he would have to endure through eternity after the Crucified Jesus had come to judge the quick and the dead.

The ceremony naturally began with a solemn recitation of the Apostles' Creed.

But no—my memory is at fault. That was not

exactly the scene. The robed bishops were there, and the heretic, and the stained-glass light; and it is true that he was to be found guilty without a trial. But his punishment was to be different. For some reason or other, he was not to be punished at all; at least he was not to be physically harmed. And that being the case, even the robes and the soft light and the recitation of the Creed failed to bring back the whole medieval situation.

But why, one might ask, had the bishops decided not to punish the heretic after going to the trouble of finding him guilty? The answer is that the bishops had decided upon nothing of the sort. The thing had been decided for them, because the State had stepped in and taken all such power away.

One would like to believe that Jesus had put a stop to the practice. But he had not; at least, not the Jesus of the theologies. It was in His Name that the bishops began to burn heretics in the first place, and it was in His Name that they cried bitterly when the State interfered with their right to do so. And it was not the followers of the theological Jesus who had influenced the State to interfere: that was the work of infidels and unbelievers and atheists.

But the State had not put a stop to heresy trials. It had not even interfered with the practice of burning heretics in hell; it was only their being burned on earth to which the State objected.

But this, somehow, made a big difference. Although the earthly burning was only an incident, as compared with the other—if one were to believe the theologies literally—omitting it seemed to make everything different. It was possible for even the defendant to be light hearted.

There was another great difference between this scene in Cleveland and the medieval ceremony it was assuming to re-enact. There was a long table at one side of the hall, near the front, at which there sat a score or more of young men and women whose business it was to tell the world exactly what was happening. All the big press services were represented there, while many of the New York and Chicago papers had special representatives. The Cleveland reporters, of course, were out in full force; although there was to be no physical punishment, a heresy trial in 1924 was looked upon as a novelty.

I learned later that the reporters felt unanimously that I was guilty of all the charges preferred against me. But they were in two factions. One group was loyal to the Church, several orthodox Episcopalians having been assigned to the job, while the other group was composed of out-and-out skeptics. Both agreed that I should be thrown out of the Church, because it was evident that I did not "accept its teachings"; but the infidel element felt personally friendly toward me while the kindest judgment the others could give was that I must be crazy.

But they were there, not to express their opinions but to tell the news. And the news, it turned out, was that no motion of the defense was granted.

These men were all accustomed to covering court trials, and, according to the canons of the Church, an ecclesiastical trial of this nature was to follow the principles of common law and of the laws of the state in which it was held. There was, then, no mysterious ecclesiastical procedure for the reporters to become acquainted with. They were on familiar ground, and they reported the proceedings faithfully.

By unanimous vote, I heard later, the "press table" acquitted me. I do not mean by that that the reporters had reached my point of view, or even the decision that I was not a heretic. I was given to understand merely that they agreed that I had had no trial. I had simply been railroaded to a conviction.

It being evident at the start that I was not to be tried, Mr. Sharts concentrated his efforts upon getting everything in the record, preparatory to an appeal.

He made all sorts of motions, crucial and technical. I was not interested at the time in the technicalities he brought up, but I let him have his way. The Court, he maintained, had been improperly organized, the presentment was faulty and a lot of other things. It was not until he moved for a bill of particulars that I became much interested. It was necessary, he argued, for a prisoner to know the nature of the crime charged against him, and it was necessary that I should be informed as to how each of these twenty-three paragraphs was alleged to controvert the doctrine of the Church.

Needless to say, no bill of particulars was granted. Every motion of Mr. Sharts, in fact, was overruled unanimously.

He finally asked for the privilege of examining the jurors as to whether they had any prejudice against the defendant, or whether they had reached any conclusion as to his guilt or innocence, or were otherwise disqualified to sit in his case.

Overruled, of course, unanimously.

The request to have a commission appointed—the commission which was to procure testimony from

the bishops as to what the doctrine of the Church was, as to whether symbolic interpretation of the Creeds is permissible and as to their own interpretation of the supernaturalism of the Bible—this was similarly overruled—unanimously.

Then came a two-day struggle on the part of Mr. Sharts to secure a declaration as to what the doctrine of the Church was—the doctrine which I was accused of controverting. The Court, it seems, was determined not to give such a declaration.

That I was to be found guilty everybody knew; but the newspaper men and women, up to this time, had apparently not guessed that it was to be done this way. They had supposed, it seems, since I was charged with holding views contrary to the teachings of the Church, that the Church would not hesitate to say what those teachings were.

But the Court hesitated and the comedy began. On the second day it adjourned proceedings for an hour, then it emerged with the declaration that it had taken "judicial notice" that the doctrine of the Church could be found in the Book of Common Prayer, especially in the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds.

It was difficult after that to maintain the illusion of impressiveness. My innocence or guilt no longer seemed to be the issue. The whole question was: Could this masterful lawyer compel the Court to admit what it was doing?

Was I being charged with a crime? If so, what was the crime? Was it heresy? If so, what was heresy? Was it the crime of differing from them in my belief? If so, what did they believe? They had begun proceedings by repeating the Apostles' Creed,

but that did not explain the difference, for I had joined in with them.

We all believed the Creeds, but *how?* Referring to the Creeds once more surely did not clear that question up. My way of believing them was alleged to be criminal, while their way was presumably innocent. What was the right way? Which, if either way, was permissible?

Mr. Sharts somehow managed to get all these questions stated before a Court which was determined that he should not state them. I can not describe how it was done. For an hour or more, for instance, without once diverging from strictly legal procedure, he read the Prayer Book aloud in open court: the Service for the Burial of the Dead, the Penitential Office for Ash Wednesday, the Sunday called Sexagesima, and what not.

"Mr. Sharts," Bishop Murray finally interrupted, "really what is your purpose?"

"I am trying to find the doctrine," Mr. Sharts informed him.

There was loud laughter throughout the hall. Times had changed tremendously since the days when the Church could burn its heretics—and did. This was anything but a solemn occasion.

"If that occurs again," said the President, "the Court will have to interfere." But Mr. Sharts explained that he was entirely serious. It was evident, in fact, that he had not caused the laughter: the solemn efforts of the bishops to keep the doctrine out of sight was entirely responsible for that.

"Don't you rather feel, as the Court does," asked Bishop Murray, "that you have gone far enough along that line?"

"I have no other way to find the doctrine," Mr. Sharts explained, "unless the Court will help me. With the refusal of the Court to indicate to me what part of this book is doctrine, I am trying to locate it, in order that I may then examine the statements that have been read in evidence as purporting to be errors of that doctrine, and then show wherein they conflict."

"That being your purpose," the Court was compelled to say, "you may proceed."

But Mr. Sharts was not permitted to find the doctrine. The Court would not say, and the prosecutor would not say, which, among the multitude of dogmas set forth in the liturgy, they would now insist upon a bishop believing; above all, they would give no ruling as to how any one of them must be believed.

There was no more confusion by this time, for everybody realized just what was going on. The newspaper men all saw it plainly, and it would be a slur upon the intelligence of the Court and the prosecutors to intimate that they did not see it. But it was a new situation; and in order to cope with it, they would have to depart from ecclesiastical tradition. Their attitude then was the characteristic attitude of ecclesiasticism. Up against something which ecclesiasticism could not deal with, they tried to make believe that it did not exist.

Their make-believe was absurd, and they must have known it; for they were not a group of Fundamentalist fanatics but a group of highly educated, highly cultured and highly respected leaders in the Church.

The President of the Court was Bishop John

Gardner Murray of Maryland, who later became the Presiding Bishop of the Church. With him were Bishop Reese of Georgia, Bishop Bratton of Mississippi, Bishop Brewster of Maine, Bishop Faber of Montana, Bishop Parker of New Hampshire, Bishop Page of Michigan and Bishop McCormick of Western Michigan.

To them was given the simplest question a Court had ever been called upon to solve. There were absolutely no complications, but there were tremendous implications and they refused to accept the responsibility which a simple answer to a simple question would have entailed. So they staged a grand game of horse-play instead—"Hide-and-seek," Mr. Sharts called it—judicially producing answers which had no bearing whatever upon the question that was being asked and pretending to be stupid long after the pretense had ceased to fool anybody who was looking on. The comedy had now degenerated into farce but it was excellent farce.

I could have been convicted—legally and properly—if the Church had wished to convict me in the only simple and straightforward way the conviction could have been brought about. But that would have committed the Church to a definite, literal acceptance of certain specific supernaturalistic dogmas: the dogma of a personal God, perhaps, or the special Divinity of Jesus, or his Virgin Birth, or his bodily resurrection, or what not. As it was, I was convicted illegally and improperly because all concerned, excepting the defendant, seemed to feel that the Church could not afford to be straightforward.

For the Church, try to hide the fact as it might, was conducting these proceedings in the year 1924;

and in 1924, everybody knew, it was highly inadvisable, if not absolutely impossible, for it to draw a line beyond which a bishop must not think.

Assuredly the line could not be drawn at a literal belief in the Deity of Jesus; any number of the Church's prominent spokesmen were openly questioning that dogma. And if they were unwilling to convict me for denying the Godhood of Jesus, it would be embarrassing to convict me for doubting his historic manhood. As to the Virgin Birth, that would not do at all. A few educated people here and there still pretended to believe literally in the Virgin Birth, but the rest of the world did not know what they were talking about.

Had there been any intention of drawing the line at that, the presence in court of the Reverend Doctor Algernon S. Crapsey must certainly have prevented it. Doctor Crapsey had been convicted of that specific unbelief nearly twenty years before. But that was the last heresy trial our church had indulged in, and the Church had been trying its best to live down the memory of it.

Doctor Crapsey had come to visit me during the trial. His autobiographic book, *The Last Heretic,* was already in the publisher's hands; and he insisted throughout that I could not take the title away from him. In one sense, at least, I could not, whatever this verdict might be. For Doctor Crapsey had been persecuted by literal bigots, who, however unfair they might be, actually were trying to commit the Church to a specific supernaturalistic dogma. I, on the other hand, was in the hands of liberal, kindly, educated and cultured gentlemen, who per-

ceived the extreme folly of committing the Church to any such ridiculous standard.

Personally, these men were most considerate. Doctor Crapsey's prosecutors had tried in every legal way, economic and social, to cause him all the suffering they could. My judges and prosecutors tried their best to make me comfortable. The condition of my health seemed to be their first concern; and not once, at any time, did they intimate that I was anything that a retired bishop ought not to be, except in the one item that I did not believe the doctrines which they could not or would not name.

I give the bishops credit for not realizing, before they came to Cleveland, what a magnificent farce the whole proceeding would be. I think it was their original intention to convict me legally; and although I had explained the predicament in which they would find themselves, I do not think that they understood my explanation. It involved the perception of a new idea, and new ideas dawn slowly on mankind; most slowly, sometimes, upon the better-educated sections of it.

I had explained painstakingly that it was not necessary to have any trial; that the charge against me was not a question of what I believed but how I believed it; that I had read the Mosaic astronomy and geology out of the Bible, doubtless much as they had done themselves, and had read into it the Copernican and Darwinian interpretations: only I had gone further in this direction than they, and had read out all the supernaturalistic deities and devils and had read in the evolutionary and Marxian concepts of man's relation to the universe and to man-

kind. So it would not be necessary to have a trial; let them just state what supernaturalistic concepts they insisted on all bishops holding, and if I could not subscribe to the statement they would thus draw up, I would resign and save the Church from the embarrassment of a trial.

I had explained all this as thoroughly as I could; but I do not believe my fellow bishops grasped the point until it confronted them in actual court proceedings. They were sure that I was guilty. There was not the shadow of a doubt in their minds that my views were contrary to the doctrine of the Church, and only when they were called upon to be specific and state what the doctrine was, did they realize the predicament that they were in.

But they had gone too far by this time to retreat. If they were to insist that the Creeds be interpreted literally *in toto,* even they themselves could not remain in the Church. But if they were to concede that they might all be interpreted symbolically, *I* could remain; and that, apparently, was unthinkable.

Only one other course seemed possible, and that would involve a pronouncement for which there was no precedent in all church history: that was for the Court to state specifically which dogmas must be interpreted literally and to which ones a symbolic interpretation might be permitted.

It turned out that there was still one more course —the course which the bishops took. That was to turn the whole proceeding into a farce—solemnly going on with the "trial" while solemnly refusing to intimate what it was all about.

XII

THE RIGHT REVEREND DOCTORS' DILEMMA

I had failed, I felt, when I first published *Communism and Christianism,* to secure consideration for the idea which it discussed. I had emphasized throughout that I had not given up my religion, and not even my religious beliefs. All I had given up was my *supernaturalistic interpretations;* but the very word *religion* was still so confused with supernaturalism in the minds of Americans generally that very few readers were able to see the difference.

In the meantime, most of the church leaders had given up most of the old supernaturalism, Modernists and Fundamentalists alike; but all of them, except me, had hung on to a part of it, and when I rejected it all, everybody seemed to agree that I did not belong in the Church. An outsider might argue against the whole supernaturalistic thesis, but for a bishop to argue against it seemed either crazy or indefensible.

But what I had failed to get the public to see in a thesis, it was now reading plainly in the daily news. Daily it was being broadcasted from Trinity Cathedral that the bishops still refused to state the doctrine which they accused me of not subscribing to; and daily it was sinking into the mind of Americans that I was not trying to defend myself against the charge of heresy but challenging the Church to state

what heresy was. Not what it used to be—for everybody was now a heretic, according to the ancient standards—but what it was in 1924.

Our prepared defense had all been ruled out. I was accused of not believing something which the other bishops believed; but what the other bishops believed was held to be immaterial. We did, however, have three witnesses. They could not, to be sure, prove that I was orthodox, unless some standard of orthodoxy were set up. But they could prove, if any one were interested in hearing them: (1) that the Church had no such standards as that which everybody seemed to be assuming that it had, (2) that its so-called fundamental dogmas, so far from being special revelations from God to Christians, were borrowed from the superstitions and fairy-tales of ancient heathen civilizations, and (3) that it is psychologically impossible for any one living in modern times to believe the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed in the way that they were believed, and were intended to be believed, by their formulators.

But the Court did not care to hear any such things, and ruled once more—unanimously, of course—that any testimony to this effect would be immaterial. So Doctor Whatham, Colonel West and Professor Schroeder were not permitted to testify.

What was the Church afraid of? That was the only question, by this time, that the onlookers in the courtroom seemed to be interested in. Scores of them crowded around me at each adjournment. They said they had supposed at first that I had no case but that it had become evident that the Church had none.

It was not, I am sure, a case of sympathy with the under dog, for no one in court, at least, now looked upon me as enacting such a rôle. A Court committed to supernaturalistic theories which could no longer be defended (and a Court intelligent enough to realize that they could no longer be defended) was trying to suppress the spirit of inquiry—in 1924. Under such circumstances, any tender-hearted person must have felt sorry for the Court. I know *I* did, and I winced occasionally when it seemed that Mr. Sharts was rather rubbing it in. But I did not stop him. The whole Church was committed to this same futile supernaturalism, and now was our chance to liberate it. By no possibility, of course, could we get the bishops to budge from their position; but we could and did make that position look so ridiculous that thinking people everywhere could see exactly why the Church was not functioning in the life of the day.

If the bishops had been conducting a funeral, instead of a trial, there would have been no such opportunity. Any statement that is emotionally plausible may be made at a funeral; and when the officiating clergyman consigns the departed soul to a home in the skies, no one arises to ask for exact details, or to cross-examine him as to what became of his former consignments.

But it was not so here. It was emotionally plausible, when the proceedings began, to convict me of heresy. But after we had asked what heresy was, and the Court refused to answer, such a conviction was emotionally plausible no longer. In the old days, such a question would have made no difference. It would have been equivalent to one's asking "What is witchcraft?" if he found himself on trial for

being a witch. But this was in 1924, and in the minds of most people such a question now seemed entirely relevant.

The newspapermen, eager to find out why the Court was dodging all the facts, were not entirely disappointed. Indeed, if Mr. Schroeder's testimony had been officially admitted, it could scarcely have played a more important part in the proceedings than it actually did. For his analysis explained everything to everybody.

Although he was not permitted to testify, the Court could not stop Mr. Sharts from reading into the record the points which he expected Mr. Schroeder to make.

Science and tradition now met face to face. They had never done so in a heresy trial before. Up to this time, people had been accused and tried and punished for not believing certain things when nobody knew what the mental process which they called "belief" was. But modern psychology had investigated this matter, and it had discovered, among other things, that there can be no uniformity of belief.

Not only that, but our beliefs on any subject necessarily change as we grow up. Although we accept the same creed that we did when we were children, we do not and can not hold the same belief. We may even use the same identical words; but we necessarily put new meanings into those words. The words may be the same but the mental content is different, and belief is not a matter of words but of mental content.

Especially is this demonstrable, Mr. Shroeder was prepared to prove, where a formulated doctrine has been passed on from century to century. The people

of the later centuries may stick to the formula, but by no possibility can they hold the same belief.

"We expected to prove by this witness," Mr. Sharts was reading into the record—and the fact that the Court had declared it immaterial only made it more impressive—"that the mental content of words changes from age to age, according to the mental development of the race and of the individual; and that the meaning of the words used by the founders of our Church doctrine was necessarily a very different meaning from that which people living to-day derive from the same words. That this evolution of words is in obedience to a law of nature. That it is impossible to resist obedience to that law; that it is impossible to retain the same meanings to words in the twentieth century that they had in the third century; that it is impossible for us of this age even to understand the words in the sense in which they were used seventeen centuries ago.

"We expected him to show," he went on, "that the words of the Apostles' Creed, as we receive them to-day, and as they have been conveyed down to us, are in their mental content a very different set of meanings from what they were when the Apostles' Creed was formulated; that not only has their mental content been changed by the lapse of centuries but that it has also been changed by the translation from the original old Greek and old Latin into modern English.

"That the old Greek and Latin vocabularies from which these words were taken were of very limited extent, some two or three hundred words; that the modern English language contains many thousands of words for the expression of meaning. That the

word 'God,' as used in the third century A.D., or in primitive times by the Fathers of the Church, conveyed the conception of an old man, with a white beard, seated on a throne in the sky, like a king upon a throne on earth.

"That the word 'heaven' conveyed a meaning of a roof called a firmament above the clouds, which divided the waters of heaven from the waters of earth, and with openings in it, through which the angels and other spirits descended upon the earth, and through which the sun and the moon and the stars were hung out like lamps.

"That the concept of the word 'earth,' when that word was used, was a flat surface, fixed and immovable, between heaven and hell.

"That the word 'hell' conveyed a meaning of a fiery place underneath the earth, out of which devils and evil spirits came up as through trap-doors, to visit people with sickness and blindness and deformity, or to snatch them away to torment."

There was a lot more of it, but that is enough to indicate the drift. There were some shocking statements in this analysis to those who had never given their creeds a thought. But the statements, I am sure, were not shocking to the Court; for the bishops must have done some little thinking by this time, and they must have realized that all these statements were true.

In a way, we came to the defense of the bishops. When the proceedings began, it was generally supposed that they were orthodox, but we exonerated them from any such charge. Mr. Schroeder, by analyzing the Creed, not merely for its words but for the meaning of those words in the minds of its for-

mulators, made it clear to everybody what orthodoxy really was. There was less wonder after that that the bishops had refused to define the term. They were not fools. They were simply crooked.

When I say, however, that the bishops were crooked, I do not mean to charge them with any conscious dishonesty. Moreover, I do not mean to charge them with any failure to do what they believed to be right. I mean that they did not do the straight thing because, from their point of view, the straight thing would have been wrong. They had all rejected the old orthodox standard. It had simply gone overboard as untenable baggage, not through any formal resolution to throw it over but because it was generally understood among educated people that "nobody believes in such things to-day."

There was a wide margin of dispute, however, as to just what beliefs had been discarded. Many bishops who were quite familiar with the Higher Criticism, and who had consequently relinquished any notions they might have had as children in regard to the accuracy and authority of every word in the Holy Scriptures, were still vehemently opposed to "Modernism." On the other hand, many of these "Modernists" were quoting Jesus in support of their position, and believed devoutly in the mystic experience of actual fellowship with the Mystic Christ.

In fact, no two bishops could agree exactly as to the way the creeds should be interpreted, and there had been a general feeling in the Anglican communion that we must agree to disagree. We had our Low Church and our High, our Catholic element and our Protestant, and now our Modernists and our Fundamentalists.

But on one point they could all agree; and that was that the Protestant Episcopal Church was no place for an out-and-out atheist, a man who had no religious convictions whatever, one who openly ridiculed, as they saw it, all of the principles and all of the truths upon which the Church was founded.

And to do their best, that was exactly what they thought of me. It was a shock to them, no doubt, not to be able to find a standard of measurement by which they could actually measure me and find me wanting; but this failure did not, in their minds, excuse them from their bounden duty. To them, I was an irritant in the Church, a common disturber; a man, to be sure, who could not technically be proved insane, and could not now, it seems, be proven guilty of heresy—owing to the absence of any rule to go by and not to any merit of his own—but he could be thrown out of the ministry he was disgracing, if not by regular methods, by a little irregularity.

I think I understand the bishops' point of view. I think I got it at the time. Their course was crooked, not at all because they wanted it to be, but because they were trying to guide themselves by a theological compass through a scientific sea. They were trying to find their way about in the twentieth century with a fourth-century light, and the light was of no use to them whatever.

But they did not think they had a right to use any other light. On ordinary occasions they might have done so. Had one of their number come down with leprosy, they would not have felt themselves bound by the treatments prescribed by the old traditions. But one of their number had come down with heresy, and that was different. Heresy did not exist in this

age of science; and to treat it at all, they had to step back into an age that had passed away. But this meant that they must ignore realities and act upon pretense, and when any one takes such a step as that, he can not go straight.

So they went crooked. But they were good fellows in their way and they gave me an opportunity to go crooked too. It was a fitting climax and told more eloquently than I could possibly have told just why the Church has lost its position of moral leadership.

I was permitted to testify in my own defense. No other testimony, remember, was allowed; but they did permit me to tell my story. It was not a long one. I simply related my experiences and told how I had come to write *Communism and Christianism,* and how these new views, instead of destroying my Christian faith, had liberated it. I could now believe the Creeds, I said, in a ten times more meaningful way than it had been possible to believe them when I was orthodox. For I could think about them to-day. I could think straight, and act straight, for I did not feel myself bound by impossible literal interpretations.

In the old days, I tried to explain, it was necessary for me not to do any thinking; for if a clergyman should discover some truths at variance with the accepted doctrine of the Church, it was necessary for him to pretend otherwise. He could not be honest. He could not be true to his revelation, but would have to tone it down. But I did not have to tone anything down now. The whole universe of truth was open to me for exploration; and not being bound to interpret the Creeds literally, I could now see in them the symbols of truths which were greater and

more inspiring than any concepts I had formerly held.

But my words, I am sure, did not sink in. If they had not been driven home by the act of the Church Advocate, few in the court-room would have got their whole meaning.

"Do you believe in God?" Mr. Sharts asked me.

"Yes," I said.

"The Father Almighty?"

"Yes."

"Maker of Heaven and Earth?"

And he went on thus, not only through the Apostles' but the Nicene Creed; and to each question I found it possible to answer a fervent "Yes," explaining occasionally that, were I bound by literalism, the "Yes" must have been much less fervent, even in my most orthodox days.

The newspapers said it was a most dramatic scene. I did not appreciate, myself, that it could contain any element of the unexpected. I had said in my book that I believed the Creeds, but the statement in print must have carried little weight. At any rate, there was a profound hush in the court-room, now that I was repeating them, and the hush was broken only by the sobbing of one of the dear bishops who had signed the presentment.

I knew this man well, and loved him. They were no crocodile tears, I was sure. It broke this man's heart to do the thing he was doing; and it took courage and faith and high resolve to go on with it.

There was no such strain upon me. All I had to do was to give straight answers to the questions that were being asked. I simply had to face things as they were and describe them as they were; and there was

no tug at my heart-strings compelling me to assert that they were something which I knew they were not. But I knew what that tug was. I had experienced it in my first crude contact with straightforward scientific thought; and I sympathized with those who were experiencing it now.

Well, I finished my testimony and the grand opportunity to be crooked came.

"Did you intend," the Church Advocate asked me, "that that profession of faith you made at the close of your testimony be understood as a retraction of your book *Communism and Christianism?*"

"Oh, no, not one word of it," I hastily explained.

So the Court retired and returned presently with its verdict.

I was found guilty, of course—unanimously. But not until I had been given this opportunity to recant. By one little lie—and a lie, at that, which could possibly have deceived nobody—I might even then have been welcomed back into the fellowship of the Church.

It would not have been necessary for me to change my views. I might still go on believing every word in *Communism and Christianism;* if I would only pretend that I did not, that was all that would have been required of me. The whole world might know that I was a sniveling hypocrite; and my judges themselves would surely have despised me if I had entered into this game of pretense. But officially, they must have accepted the lie and given it their theological benediction. For it was theology, not human needs, with which they were dealing; and in theology it is the letter, not the truth, which counts.

XIII

I RECOVER MY HEALTH—THROUGH HERESY, PUBLICITY AND BAD TASTE

I was now a convicted heretic, but it was impossible to feel very badly about it. I was grieved, of course, that any official body of the Church should take such a stand. I had hoped, for the Church's sake, that the bishops might meet the issue in a straightforward way; but, on the other hand, their not doing so had made plain to millions of people, who otherwise must have missed the point, that the old dogmas would not bear examination and that my judges, although they might convict me, did not dare to state their case in open court.

I do not mean that the public was suddenly converted to my point of view. The public, I believe, was still as orthodox as usual, and probably much more orthodox than the average bishop. A jury of ordinary "believers," even though they had become very careless about church attendance, would not have found me such a problem as the bishops did. They would have said off-hand that a Christian must believe in supernaturalism. They would probably have insisted that he interpret all the Bible stories literally; that the whale swallowed Jonah, that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, and that our very flesh and bones will one day take on life at a signal from Gabriel's trumpet and we shall have to answer

before the Judge of the Universe for every deed that was ever done in them.

The public, to be sure, had long since quit acting according to any such beliefs. But such literalism, it still felt, constituted orthodoxy; and there was something underhanded about a clergyman's denying all these things and still assuming to hold his job in the Church.

In the Modernist-Fundamentalist controversy, the public was inclined to side with the Fundamentalists. It was not Fundamentalist itself, to be sure, but it seemed to think a minister should be. If a man did not believe the teachings of the Church, it was always saying, he ought to be honest and get out; and the public had largely gotten out.

To such as these, my "trial" was a revelation. It revealed that orthodoxy did not have a leg to stand on.

"Why was Bishop Brown railroaded instead of tried?" was the big question which the proceedings had evoked. I knew why and the bishops knew why; but the public did not know why, because it had not dawned upon the public before that such a thing could happen.

Even some Episcopalians became curious and I began to receive letters from them. Not many, I admit. Episcopalians are wonderful people in many ways, but championing those who have been impudent toward the most respectable element in society is not likely to be their outstanding trait.

All in all, I felt that my conviction had been worth while. My status in the Church had not been changed. I was convicted but I was not sentenced. There were two courts, according to the canons, to

which I could still appeal, and neither of them had canonical authority to sentence me. Only the House of Bishops itself could do that, and it could depose me only by a two-thirds vote.

The Trial Court had played into my hands. It had done what I had tried to do and failed. I had told the Court that it could not define heresy to-day, and the Court had told the world that it could not. Incidentally, it had not only found me guilty without a trial, but in its eagerness to do so it had run rough shod over many of the traditions which it was trying to defend.

Our Church had traditionally held to the Scriptures as the sole standard of doctrine, but this Court had substituted the Book of Common Prayer. Our Church had broken from Rome on the theory that one bishop is not superior to another; yet here were a group of bishops assuming to deny another bishop's right to interpret the Creeds.

Even the canons which provided for the trial of a bishop had not been obeyed. The Church had carefully guarded itself against the possibility of a bishop's conviction through some temporary prejudice of which he might be the victim, and had stipulated that the court for the trial of a bishop should be composed of nine members, only three of whom should be appointed at any one meeting of the triennial General Convention. But six of my judges had been appointed at the previous General Convention, and three of these appointments were clearly irregular.

There were plenty of points, then, upon which to appeal my case to the Court of Review. I wondered, sometimes, if the Trial Court had not purposely vio-

lated the canons in these many ways so that my conviction would be upset upon some technicality, instead of upon the actual merits of my case. In the meantime, I would probably die before the next convention could rectify the mistakes of the last one, and a perfectly legal court could get around to the business of giving me a trial.

With me out of the way, I thought, the issues I had raised might be forgotten; for it would be a long time, in all probability, before another clergyman would make the complete break with literalism which I had made and challenge the Church to answer: "What is Heresy?"

My fears, however, were groundless. In the first place, the bishops, no matter how impossible they found it to take a straightforward attitude toward the issues I had raised, were as honest and sincere as they knew how to be. They wanted to condemn me, and they wanted to have everybody know that I was repudiated by the Church. In the second place, I was not dying. My long-lost health, in fact, seemed to be coming back. I felt better than I had felt in years. I began to take on weight. I actually gained thirty pounds before I faced the Court of Review, in the same Cathedral, in January, 1925.

I did a lot of work in the intervening months. I was surprised to find how much I could do. Once again, I want to thank my fellow bishops for making all this possible.

I was a broken-down old man when I first went to trial. When I faced the Court of Review I was still an old man, but most of my anxieties were over. I had a job to do, but it was a pleasant job, and I no longer worried about getting it done. I would simply

state the case; and the Review Court could face it or run away from it, just as it saw fit. I did not have to solve the problem now, for them or anybody. I could just *be* the problem, and let those who were interested solve it as they might.

Heretofore, I had felt with evangelistic fervor that I must induce the Church to forsake an attitude which was keeping it from functioning in the modern world. I now decided that I had no such responsibility. If the Church did not want to function, that was the Church's business, not mine. It was my business simply to face things as they were, to tell what I saw, to explain everything I could to those who wanted to have things explained; and if people were more interested in other things than they were in the truth, hereafter it would not worry me at all.

I had once been more interested in other things myself. I had once answered Darwin without reading him; and the Church was now similarly answering me without trying to find out what it was all about. That was fair enough, if the Church wanted it that way. My conviction of Darwin had apparently not hurt Darwin, and I could afford not to be hurt by any similar attitude toward me.

That simplified things marvelously. It did not mean that I had lost interest in the Church. It simply meant that I had found peace with God; not with any God in the skies, however, whom I should have to spend a worried life defending, but with the one true God—Reality—the God of Things as They Are.

It was brought out by the Church Advocate, in the Trial Court proceedings, that the charge against me was not that I held erroneous views, but views

contrary to the doctrine of the Church. The Prosecution conceded that my views might be scientifically correct, but insisted that that would be altogether immaterial. If I were right and the creeds were wrong, I would still be guilty of the charge against me.

This, naturally, was a comfort to me; but in preparing my case for review, I was not guided by it. I thought I would show the bishops, just for the fun of it if for no other purpose, that my views were correct; and I painstakingly analyzed every one of the twenty-three paragraphs in the presentment in the light of the scientific facts which were now available.

It was a pretty large document which I drew up, and it was by no means a religious pamphlet. I simply stated my views, and the views of modern science so far as I could state them, upon the purely theological propositions discussed.

Theology, I now saw clearly, is not religion. Theology is no more religion than monogamy, or polygamy, is sex. Theology is simply a theory about religion, and any particular theology is either scientifically right or wrong, or scientifically doubtful. In this particular analysis, I aimed to demonstrate that the ancient Christian theology was flatly contradicted by all modern science, and that my views as expressed in those twenty-three paragraphs were scientifically unassailable.

I did not, however, depend upon my own analysis. I submitted the document, when I had it finished, to two scientists of international reputation, who labored over it and revised it and put it into words that no scientist would question.

That document played no part in the trial. I speak of it only to suggest an explanation as to why my views were attacked merely as heretical and why the Church made no effort to prove that they were wrong.

When my book was first published, Bishop Gailor was quoted as saying that it would be as easy to refute my heresies as to crush a fly with a sledge-hammer. I have no doubt that he was sincere in saying this, but for some reason or other, no refutation was ever issued. On further reflection, it may have seemed easier still to convict me of heresy without any attempt at refutation and without even a trial.

This document, with others, was submitted to the Court of Review. Whether it was even read or not I do not know, for no member of the court, to my knowledge, has ever mentioned it.

Bishop Leonard, of Ohio, was President of this Court. Bishop Leonard was my close friend, but not exactly the sort of friend to whom I should have looked for a sympathetic understanding of *Communism and Christianism.*

But he had liked *The Church for Americans*. He, in fact, was largely responsible for my having written it; and if my mind had only closed when that book was completed, Bishop Leonard and I might still have been intellectual comrades. My views had changed considerably in time while his had changed not so considerably. Otherwise, however, we were still great friends. It was a calamity, he thought, that I had permitted myself to entertain such views about God. It was a calamity, I thought, that the Church should concern itself with a mere difference of opin-

ion among its bishops concerning such a debatable question as God.

Bishop Leonard, however, knew my honesty and my zeal. He had recognized them, in spite of my intellectual limitations, when I was orthodox. It was he who made me Arch-Deacon of Ohio, and it was he who insisted that I become a lecturer in the Theological Seminary, when there were ever so many more intellectual clergymen to choose from, because he had heard me speak upon "The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist."

I remembered that address well, and I could not help recalling it when I faced Bishop Leonard in court. I had come to live, in the meantime, in an altogether new world. The very qualities which had made my orthodoxy so fervent were now making my heresy stick out. I had not repudiated my former views: I had simply outgrown them. I felt no antagonism toward the Church and could feel none. But I saw things which the Church could not yet see; and until it did see them, I felt, it could not do the work which both Bishop Leonard and I longed to have it do.

He was quite as eager as I. There was no possible question as to that. We both felt that the world was lost. We both yearned for its redemption. We both felt that it was the Church's business to lead it into the way of truth. Moreover, we were not strangers. We knew each other intimately and it was not the slightest trouble for me, at least, to comprehend his point of view. I had held it myself —and such a short time ago that there was not the slightest danger of my forgetting it.

And yet, there was such a gulf between us. I had

had a revelation which had not come to him. It would come in time, I knew, if he lived long enough: the whole Church would get it in time, if it were true, and I knew that it was true. But unless I could explain it to my dear old friend, Bishop Leonard, and explain it to him now, that Church was going to cast me out as a heretic and a perverter of the one true theory that was necessary for the world's salvation.

I began to understand now why *Communism and Christianism* had seemed like "hard reading" to so many good churchmen. I knew it was not indefinite or vague. It was hard reading because it was so different. It was unreadable because it was new. It would be impossible, I now saw clearly, for anybody like Bishop Leonard to get anything whatever out of any document which began with the words: "Banish Gods from the Skies and Capitalists from the Earth."

Nevertheless, it was necessary to convert Bishop Leonard, and there were no words in the language by which he could be converted. But he was honest and good, and if he could not be converted by words, he could in time be converted by events.

Of one thing I was sure. Bishop Leonard, no matter how horrible a heretic he might think me, would not sanction my conviction without making every possible effort to define my crime and say what heresy was. And I was equally sure, no matter how hard he tried, that he could not say.

I felt much the same, for that matter, toward the rest of the Court. They were my friends too. Events had estranged us, to be sure, but events would yet bring us together. Events, not arguments. Things

would have to happen, at least, before the arguments could be understood.

It was said that I sought publicity. I admit that I welcomed it. Publicity had to do with things that were happening in our time, and if the Church could not relate itself to those happenings she was done for.

It was never claimed that I sought publicity merely for my side of the case. I sought publicity for all sides, and it was through me, often, that the newspapers learned what the other side was doing. It was through me, for instance, that they first learned that I had been presented for trial. The Prosecution had not given it out. The Prosecution was extremely modest and I was seemingly shameless. Whatever the Church did about me, it preferred to do in the dark. I could not stop it, I knew, from doing what it wanted to do; but I was determined, if I could, to make it see what it was doing. Its doings, I figured, would then become something more than subconscious gestures, which might be conveniently forgotten after they were made. They would become news—the record of actual events with which they would have to deal objectively.

From this time on—that is, from the time that the Review Court opened its proceedings—I saw very clearly where the real fight was. It was a fight, on my part, to get all the facts told—no matter in how bad a light they seemed to put me at the time. It was a fight on their part to keep the thing out of the papers.

Of course I exhibited "bad taste"; and bad taste, in the eyes of many Episcopalians, constitutes a clear majority of the seven deadly sins. But I could not

help it. It was unimportant, I now saw, *what* I was convicted of: the important thing was that everybody should see exactly what was going on.

A new idea had come to earth. I had not *got* it; it had *got me*. I had not been able to do much with it, but it could, I saw, do a lot of things with me. It needed a one hundred per cent. heretic to work with, and I was the only bishop in America who qualified. It was necessary for its purposes that this bishop be tried for heresy, and that it be demonstrated, so that nobody could possibly fail to comprehend, that no such thing as heresy exists.

I did not know even then how important it was that this should be demonstrated. I could only think of it in terms of the Church I loved. I wanted that Church to function, and it was not functioning. If it were liberated from this ancient obsession, I felt, it might take a leading place once more in the world at large. But that was about as far as I could see at the time.

I see much farther now, but I shall not tell it here. In order that my readers may understand what follows, I want them to drop any sympathy they may have had with me.

Literally, I had no case. If anybody could be unfrocked for heresy, I could certainly be. Had I been merely an extreme liberal, I could not have served as I did. Had I believed even vaguely in the continuance of individual life beyond the grave, I could not have served; or had I believed that Jesus, although not a God, was in some mysterious way the one Perfect Man, or had I even gone so far as to reject all supernaturalism and devoted my life to upholding the conventional ethical preachments of the Church.

Had I been any of these things, of course, I should have been as truly a heretic as I ever really was, but I should have been a heretic with extenuating circumstances. There would have been a wish, among the liberals at least, to tolerate me. As it was, there was no such wish; at least, it had not become articulate as yet. Literally, I was not only a one hundred per cent. heretic, but temperamentally I was as far away from the ecclesiastical organization as it was possible to get. I was not even urging people to be good along the good old lines. I was urging them to revolt. In my case there were no extenuating circumstances: I was a one hundred per cent. heretic, recognized on all sides as such, with the additional aggravating circumstance that I was a Communist.

Nevertheless, Bishop Leonard and his able colleagues could not locate my heresy. They worked hard at the problem for several days. Then they adjourned and decided to give the question more mature deliberation, promising that they would give the answer in a written opinion. After that they labored eight months; but when the written opinion was finally delivered, it scrupulously avoided all reference to the question it was supposed to answer.

XIV

MY CONFESSION OF FAITH

The Review Court was not taken by surprise. It had the full proceedings of the Trial Court before it, and lengthy briefs by Mr. Sharts and Mr. Dibble. In these briefs, Mr. Dibble did not entirely dodge the question. He tried to draw the line between heresy and orthodoxy. It was rather a vague line, to be sure, and would have led, if followed, into strange theological territory, but it was interesting.

The Church Advocate conceded that it was not necessary for an Episcopalian to accept all the Bible literally. One did not have to believe that it was accurate history; but he must believe that the Creeds, as regards the life of Jesus, are historically accurate. One might doubt certain alleged miracles recorded in the Bible, but he was not privileged to doubt the miracles recorded in the Creeds. As to the Creeds, said Mr. Dibble, they must be accepted "in their obvious and essential meaning."

"Freedom of interpretation," he declared, "is not absolute and unlimited. And where is it limited? It is limited at exactly the point that the Church limits it in the Creeds.

"It is open to him to say that Genesis is an allegory. It is open to him to say that it is a myth . . . but it is NOT open to him to say, in his interpretation of Genesis, that the statement in Genesis that God created the heavens and the earth is false."

This, it would be only fair to Mr. Dibble to explain, was spoken before the appearance of Professor Charles Fagnani's book which pointed out that such a statement never did really appear in Genesis. It appears only in the translations, and in the Creeds which were taken from those translations, not in the original Hebrew of the Pentateuch.

In the Hebrew, says Professor Fagnani, it says that "Elohim" created the heavens and the earth; and "Elohim" was the name of the primitive tribal deity of the Hebrews, who is the protagonist of the creation story as adapted from a Babylonian source. It is an error of Hebrew scholarship, then, to translate "Elohim" as "God," as the Hebrew deity "does not begin to take on the attributes associated with our word 'God' until, say, the time of Second Isaiah."

I am not saying this in my own defense. Even if the formulators of the Creeds had not mistranslated Genesis, I should still have refused to accept their statements literally; for, try as I may, I can not believe that even Elohim created the heavens and the earth.

The Court, however, did not officially adopt Mr. Dibble's standard. The Court adopted no standard at all. It gave no hint throughout the proceedings as to what it conceived heresy to be. It did, however, give many hints that it considered me a heretic.

One by one, the Review Court overruled Mr. Sharts' exceptions. Eventually it brought in its verdict—that there had been no error in the proceedings of the Trial Court and that I was guilty as charged in the presentment.

The Review Court, Bishop Leonard explained,

could not sentence me, but it could indicate the sentence which it thought I should receive, for the guidance of the House of Bishops.

I do not charge the Court, however, with any bad faith. Bishop Leonard at the time made an announcement that was eminently fair. An issue had been raised, and it had not been answered. It was a delicate issue, and one that could not be answered offhand or in the heat of controversy. Everybody, by this time, knew I was a heretic, but nobody knew what heresy was. Everybody felt sure that my conviction would be sustained, but nobody could guess the principle which would be invoked to sustain it. So, when Bishop Leonard announced that the Court would hand down a written opinion, everybody was satisfied.

In one other respect, the Review Court displayed its willingness to be fair to me. It could not pronounce sentence; and it was not technically bound, therefore, to hear from the prisoner before announcing the sentence it would recommend for the guidance of the House of Bishops. It graciously asked me, however, if I had anything to say as to why the sentence should not be recommended.

For this I thank the Review Court. Had it not been for that opportunity, my trial might still have gone into history as a mere academic controversy. It was a Church Proceeding, but on neither side, up to this time, had there been any statement of religious conviction by which the world might know that religion, and not merely theology, was involved.

It had not occurred to me before to make such a statement. My religion had not been questioned, and I had not thought it necessary to give voice to it.

Only my theology had been questioned, and theology was all that either side had talked about.

In the meantime, a lost world needed redemption. It did not need redemption from hell, so far as any one was able to see, for there was a pretty general conviction by this time, even on the part of bishops, that there was no such place.

What people would need in another world I was in no position to guess. I knew as much about it, I felt, as any of my judges did; but none of us knew anything. But we could all see, perhaps, if the situation were stated positively enough, some of the things that were needed here and now.

It needed to be redeemed from war. We could all agree on that, even though the other bishops had blessed the last one. And we might all agree that it needed to be redeemed from poverty and wretchedness and pain.

We could not agree that it needed theology. I, at least, felt that it had enough already. But it did need religion; and religion, as I had come to define it by this time, was "the desire and the effort to live a more abundant life."

Could I, I wondered, state what my religion was all about? Whether it was orthodox or not seemed to me to matter not at all. I did not need a new Creed. I was satisfied with the Creeds as they were. But I did need Life, and I did need the living principle that I was now able to find in the Creeds, whereas I was once able to find in them nothing but little assurances concerning the future bliss of one very unimportant, and very problematical, immortal soul.

And so, instead of defending myself before the

Review Court, I read them a Confession of Faith which I had hastily prepared. I say "hastily," although the events had been preparing it for months. I had seen all the things to which I called attention, but I had never seen them before in one panoramic view. I labored nearly all one night trying to set down what I saw, not caring one whit whether it made me orthodox or heretic, nor whether my fellow bishops were ready as yet to see them or not. I gave my notes, in fact, to the Associated Press and the United Press, and to all the newspapermen who wanted them, before I spoke my creed in Court.

This was bad taste, no doubt. But it was thoroughly Christian. For I gave to those who asked of me, and the reporters by this time were asking insistently.

This was my Confession of Faith:

> Brethren of the Review Court: I thank you for allowing me to speak on my own behalf. I shall but very briefly refer to just one episode of my appearance before the Trial Court in the hope of securing for it the favorable influence it should have upon the issue of your deliberations.
>
> I was asked if I believed the Creeds, and I said I did. Then I repeated the Apostles' Creed, subscribing to it with uplifted hand as each inspiring symbol renewed my faith in the divinest of all trinities: Life, Light and Love.
>
> Feeling that you would be lacking in the patience and I in the strength necessary to extended remarks on this occasion, I have made a lengthy appeal and plea to your Court in a printed and widely circulated memorial, entitled, "The Chimera of Orthodox Supernaturalism," and believing that you will do me the

simple justice of carefully weighing its representations, I can content myself with this interpretation of that confession of my faith:

"I believe in God." Yes, my prosecutors and my judges, I do believe in God.

Not, certainly, in a God with arms and legs, and brains, and with that human attribute which we call Personality; but in the All-in-All, in which we live and move and have our being, and to whose Law we must all conform if we are to attain the most abundant life on earth, and the attainment of this life constitutes the chief end of man—all there is of true knowledge, right conduct, religion and politics and of anything else which is for the good of the world. If this law is Jehovah's will, we serve the same God.

"I believe in God, the Father Almighty."

Not, to be sure, in a literal, biological sense, is my God a Father. Not a being with masculinity, as every father must literally be. I use the word symbolically. Father is for me a precious symbol of the infinite Reality which has brought us and all things into being as parts of one all-inclusive self.

"Maker of Heaven and Earth."

Not, indeed, a designer, manufacturer and manager as the minds which codified the Creed conceived their anthropomorphic God to be. Because of the Revelations of Science, which were denied to them, my god, devil, heaven, hell, world are infinitely more complex than theirs and the symbol "Maker" must be applied to the greatest among all divine trinities: Matter, the Father; Force, the Son; and Motion, the Spirit—the creator, sustainer and governor of the world with all that in it is, physical and psychical.

"And I believe in Jesus Christ, His Only Son, Our Lord." I do believe in Jesus Christ.

Once again, not literally. In matters of history, I must be guided by the researches of historians, who

are necessarily ruthless in their criticism of biblical and ecclesiastical lore, so full of supernaturalism, impossible, if literally interpreted. Nevertheless, regardless of what conclusions historians shall reach, I accept and reverence the symbol of the Son of God, the human Epiphany or manifestation of another divine trinity: Truth, Beauty and Goodness.

"Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary."

Not literally of course. Modern biology has made the literal acceptance of this belief and of the resurrection as utterly impossible as modern astronomy has heaven and hell, for any of us; but in depriving us of its literalism the symbol is released for greater usefulness.

I believe in Jesus, not less than do the literalists, whether Modernists or Fundamentalists, but more. Jesus, to me, is more than a historical character and more than a second term in an ancient theological equation. Whatever this Court does, it can not strip me of my uplifting belief in Jesus. I see in Jesus the Man of Sorrows—every Man of Sorrows from the first dawn of human intelligence and oppression; and who, in every instance, was vilified and punished and put to death.

It is Epiphany, the manifestation. I see in Jesus the Eternal Servant manifest. I see in Him every toiling, sweating, bleeding Son of Man. I see in Him the uncounted, unnamed and unknown workers of the world, in every age and every country, in none more than ours, despised, disinherited and crucified. I see in Jesus my God and my Lord made manifest in suffering flesh.

This faith of mine is no cross-word puzzle. It is beyond words; for words at their best are but symbols of the Truth. You can not imprison God within a literal creed, not mine, nor yours. You can not limit the Truth to one incident in Roman history; and to attempt to do

so is to blind yourself even to the significance of that incident.

Remember, then, when I take the name of Jesus, that I am taking on my lips the Holy Name of the Son of God and Son of Man; and in so far as I leave one son of man out of the reckoning, I want you to count it against me for blasphemy worthy of punishment.

I want you to know that I am including in that most Holy of all names, Jesus, the Name at which every knee shall bow, all the victims of injustice, all the toilers whose unpaid labor has given leisure and luxury to a few, and all those millions who have been sent to war to bleed and die for the few.

Let us not excuse ourselves. We as a Church did help to send them to their myriad crucifixions. We blessed the war. We told them that God was on our side and that they were doing a holy thing in fighting His battles for the good of the world, whereas they fought for the enrichment and aggrandizement of the small owning class and the impoverishment and degradation of the large working class. Their blood is upon us, and it cries to heaven against the churches of the belligerent countries on both sides. We sent them into shambles of torture and into hells of hate. They were serving their country, we told them; and in our literal mindedness we directed them to a little, tribal, fictitious divinity, instead of to the great, universal, real God. I want that fact to burn into your consciousnesses if the thought of punishing me for rejecting Mosaism and Paulinism (except as symbolism) for Darwinism and Marxism so much as crosses your minds.

As between Christ and Cæsar, the church chose the state and that was a sin against the Holy Ghost, Civilization, the third member of still another divine trinity: Nature, the Father; Humanity, the Son; and Civilization, the Spirit.

Believe me, these things are in my consciousness as I take the Name of Jesus; and I want you to see it as I do, when I repeat:

"He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into Hell."

But, happily, O how happily, this, my prosecutors and my judges, is not the end. The dawn is already breaking. The Sun of Righteousness will yet arise, and Love and Life will triumph over Hate and Death. Or, to put it into the sublimest of all symbolism:

"On the third day, He rose from the dead, He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

"I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the Forgiveness of Sins, the Resurrection of the Body, and the Life everlasting."

I do believe all the Creed, including its divine Trinity, and it means a thousand times more to me now than ever. Yes, my dear judges, contrary to the chief point raised against me by my dear prosecutors, I believe in the triune God—with all my rational mind, and with all my emotional soul, I believe in this God. Besides, though I am not a saint, far from it, I have never committed one of the greater crimes against any man, woman or child, and it always has been, is now and ever shall be my meat and drink to do the will of God.

Brethren of the Court, I now await the issue.

The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with my Judges in their deliberations upon the evidence and in their determination of the verdict. Amen.

When I had finished, the Court retired to the anteroom. When it reassembled, it was only to repeat the strange question which the Church Advocate had

asked me at the close of my testimony in the Trial Court proceedings.

"In voicing this Confession of Faith," asked Bishop Leonard, "do you wish the Court to understand that you retract the views expressed in *Communism and Christianism?*"

The reader can imagine, I know, how the question struck me. When a man sees the sunrise does he retract the dawn which preceded it? When he studies higher mathematics does he retract the multiplication table? Or, when he looks upon his wife in the maturity of their love, realizing that she is not a mere vision of beauty, not a mere object of adoration, but a gloriously real helpmeet and companion, does he retract his honeymoon or his first hot words of love?

Of course I had retracted nothing. Assuredly, I had not retracted the Apostles' Creed. I had tried to show, as best I could, how meaningful it could be, if one were only freed from the tyranny of words.

"The letter killeth," I reflected. "The Spirit giveth life." But the Court was concerned with the letter, and my relation to the Church was in the hands of this Court. If I would only lie a little, all might be forgiven. The literal court might then save its face, and I would be permitted to die in the Church without any stigma upon my name.

But I could not retract. I could not even say that I did. This was not an exhibition of courage, for I am not courageous; and if the Court had had the power to burn me at the stake, I think I should have found it possible to conjure up the necessary lie.

I can not claim even the courage which Doctor Crapsey showed. For Doctor Crapsey was economi-

cally dependent upon his position in the Church, and for him to stick to his guns meant courage indeed. All I had at stake was my Episcopal prestige. The most the Court could suggest was to throw me out of the Church.

Then I thought of Doctor Crapsey. I thought, also, of hundreds of enlightened clergymen who wanted to preach the truth as they saw it, but over whom orthodoxy held its lash. They can not do so, they see, if they are to hold their jobs; and giving up their jobs may mean that their wives and children would starve.

Then I thought of the Church, reeking with the insincerity which this tyranny of orthodoxy had imposed. In that condition it could be of no use to the world. About all it could do effectively was to go on holding funerals, encouraging superstition, encouraging the scramble for individual salvation and feebly seconding every movement against world change.

Then I thought of the world which needed to know the truth, that the truth might make it free. I might not have the truth. My best studied thesis might be the sheerest nonsense. *Communism and Christianism,* in the light of future criticism, might seem as senseless as the theses of the Middle Ages now seem to us. But of one thing I was sure. The Truth, whatever it should eventually prove to be, could be attained only by an untrammeled search for it. The one thing that the suffering world needed most was that all limitations upon human thinking should be taken off.

"No," I said, "I had no intention of retracting."

"The sentence recommended by this Court," said

Bishop Leonard, "is that said William Montgomery Brown be deposed from the sacred ministry."

Many of the newspapers had it "the *scared* ministry"; and the proof-rooms, for some reason or other, let it stand.

XV

THE PLOT THICKENS—ESPECIALLY IN RUSSIA AND NEW YORK

I had been utterly defeated now in two courts. But each defeat, strangely, seemed to help my case.

When I was first presented for trial, in May, 1924, nobody in America, apparently, was on my side. Not until the Court refused to listen to my defense did any one suspect that I had any.

That set people reading *Communism and Christianism,* and multitudes outside the Church became interested. But few inside any of the churches had seemed to develop any such interest. It took the Review Court proceedings, in January, 1925, to awaken *them.* The newspapers all over the country had quoted generously from my "Confession of Faith." Here and there, I learned, lifelong Episcopalians were attracted by it; and they wrote me, telling me how they had been affected, although *Communism and Christianism* had only aroused antagonism.

There was also some kindly editorial comment in some of the church papers. Not much, to be sure, but what there was showed that the situation had changed tremendously from what it had been six months before.

A few weeks after the Review Court hearing, I was surprised and thrilled to receive a letter from the Reverend Doctor William Norman Guthrie, rector of St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, New York

City, inviting me to participate in a Sunday afternoon symposium at St. Mark's on the question: "Do Heresy Trials Serve Any Useful Purpose?"

I find it hard, even now, to express what that invitation meant to me. It took simply unlimited courage on Doctor Guthrie's part to send it. He was in the diocese of Bishop William T. Manning, as conservative and straight-laced a prelate as the Church could boast of, and Doctor Guthrie had become the victim of his disfavor. An extensive controversy between them had ended in Bishop Manning's withdrawing Episcopal visitation from St. Mark's. The controversy was not over doctrinal but purely ritualistic matters, and many most conservative churchmen were on Doctor Guthrie's side. Doctor Guthrie could not afford to alienate them. He was not a radical himself and had no sympathy whatever with Socialist and Communist views. He had a large "class," waiting to be confirmed; but unless Bishop Manning were to resume his official visits, there seemed no prospect for their receiving confirmation.

Had Doctor Guthrie been a partisan of mine, such a gesture might have been understood. It might have suited a radical temperament, throwing discretion to the winds, to wave a red rag in Bishop Manning's face. But Doctor Guthrie was not that type. My book had offended him deeply. He was a great scholar, but a profound mystic, and approached all questions from the mystic's point of view. He was also a devotee of Episcopalian Good Taste, and was offended quite as much by the manner in which I customarily presented my views as he was by the views themselves. He was, moreover, wary in his

dealings with newspapermen while I had come to trust them all implicitly.

But Doctor Guthrie believed devoutly in untrammeled utterance. He believed in the honest statement of whatever views one held. After the war, when Eugene V. Debs was eventually released from prison, Doctor Guthrie had invited him to speak at the St. Mark's forum, although he had no sympathy whatever with Mr. Debs' views.

He also had his doubts as to the value of heresy trials. Mine, as he saw it, had surely not helped the Church. The bishops had only strengthened a doctrine which they had sought to stamp out. It was time, he felt, that the Church realized what it was doing, and, wishing to have the issue thoroughly presented, he invited me to participate in the symposium.

I had supposed, up to this time, that my days of public speaking were all over. Going to Cleveland, sixty-five miles from Galion, had seemed like a tremendous undertaking for me, and though my health had improved miraculously, I had not even dreamed of going so far away from home as New York.

But why not? Even if it killed me, I thought, it would be a fitting climax. So I set about to prepare a talk which might, I thought, be fifteen minutes long.

To speak again, in a Protestant Episcopal Church —it seemed almost unbelievable. But I prepared my address.

To do my best, however, I found that I could prepare nothing but a sermon. Even in telling my own experience, it seemed that I must have a text. I found one. It was: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will

be added unto you." I knew it was only a Sunday afternoon symposium; but to me, and to the audience, I felt, it would be a sermon nevertheless.

The date set for the meeting was in April, 1925. Before it came time to go, I received another glad surprise. It was one I could say nothing about at the time, but it had its share in buoying my spirits and making me, I think, the happiest condemned man on the face of the earth.

I related, some pages back, how the Czarist prelates in Russia had received my book, and how they had desperately appealed to churchmen in America to find out what action, if any, had been taken against me. Just what part they had in instigating the proceedings, I do not know, but it seemed likely that they had been very influential. The course of ecclesiastical politics is devious, and I was never able to trace it clearly.

I knew, however, that our Church had long been making overtures to the Holy Orthodox Church of Russia to secure reciprocal recognition. We recognized the Russian Church, just as we recognized the Roman Catholic Church, as part of the very organization which had been founded by Jesus. Its bishops and clergy, as we saw it, were just like our own bishops and clergy, receiving their authority not by mere parliamentary action, nor by election in a diocese, but by *direct Apostolic succession.*

Since we called ourselves the *Protestant* Episcopal Church, and since there are so many Protestants in America to whom the word *Protestant* seems to be a synonym for *anti-Catholic,* I think I should explain this fine ecclesiastical point more definitely. When the Church of England broke away from Rome, in

the days of Henry VIII, it did not mean, in the eyes of all the English churchmen at least, that it was breaking away from the existing Church and setting up a new ecclesiastical organization.

There were out-and-out Protestants, then as now, who believed that clergymen could receive their authority direct from God, and who rather scoffed at the idea that God was bound by the principle of Apostolic Succession, but they could not speak for the whole Church of England. They were something like our Methodists and Baptists to-day. They believed when God wanted a man to preach he would tell him so; but since an individual might be mistaken, it was up to him to convince his brethren that he had had such a call, and if enough of the brethren agreed, they made him a minister or a bishop, or whatever they thought best; being careful, however, always to ask God's sanction for the act.

And if God did sanction it, that settled the matter as far as these Protestants were concerned. It might be forever debatable, to be sure, whether God sanctioned the ordination or not. But if he did, he did, and if he did not, he did not; and there was no way to tell, unless God himself told, whether such an ordination was entirely valid or was simply a bad guess on the part of fallible human beings.

But there *was* a way by which the true Catholic could always tell. The clergyman or bishop in question might turn out to be a rogue, but his ordination was valid if it was *in direct Apostolic Succession.* Jesus, in their minds, had not simply brought the gospel of salvation, and inspired certain human beings to spread it broadcast, but he had definitely founded the Church. Not *a* church, but *the* Church.

He personally ordained Peter, James and John, and the rest, and he told them to ordain their successors; and they had done so, by the laying on of hands in the ritual of ordination; only those who were thus ordained, by those who had thus received the authority to ordain them, were truly priests and bishops.

The High Church Party in the Church of England never gave up this theory. The Low Church element was inclined to soft-pedal it as a tendency toward Romanism; but the Church of England, with these two elements forever tending to tear it apart, somehow managed to remain intact.

The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, directly descended as it was from the Church of England, inherited these two conflicting notions as to the nature of its own organization. This was not considered a handicap, however. It was looked upon rather as an asset. It placed us in a peculiar position, we felt, between the Protestant and the Catholic worlds, and gave us a strategic position in the work of bringing about ultimate church unity.

We never *did* anything, to be sure, which tended to bring about such unity. We were too preoccupied, seemingly, with maintaining that strategic position. We could not, as I explained in another chapter, recognize the Methodists and Baptists and Presbyterians as on a level with us without abandoning our claim to being in Apostolic Succession. On the other hand, although we "recognized," and made a veritable business of "recognizing" both the Eastern and the Western Catholic Churches as our sure-enough equals, they simply would not recognize us.

Sometimes a Roman Catholic priest, or a priest

of one of the Eastern orthodox bodies, would join our communion. It did not happen often, but it happened. And when it did happen, we received him into full communion, not merely as a member but as a priest in our Church, without even suggesting that he be reordained. We were all one Church, we wished everybody to know, and his sacred orders in the one true Church were entirely satisfactory to us; but if a Presbyterian clergyman came into our communion, it was not only necessary to reordain him before he could think of officiating as a real clergyman, but it was even thought best that he be baptized and confirmed.

On the other hand, as frequently happened, when one of our clergymen, or even a bishop, joined the Roman Catholic Church, he could not join as a clergyman or a bishop. He could join only as any other penitent, and be baptized and confirmed and raised to holy orders just as though the Protestant Episcopal Church were no different from the Salvation Army.

What we lost, however, in not receiving recognition from these other bodies, we tried to make up in recognizing them. There was always a great ceremony in our House of Bishops when some Syrian or Armenian or Russian bishop deigned to visit us. It demonstrated, we felt, that while we were not yet recognized, the great work of church unity was progressing beautifully. We could not enter their churches, to be sure, except as laymen, but some day, we felt, we would.

Now, with all this detailed explanation of things which many readers will consider too silly to talk about, you know as much as I do about what part

the Holy Orthodox Church of Russia may have played in bringing about my condemnation.

But strange things had happened in Russia since those first frantic inquiries had come to our churchmen in America concerning the author of *Communism and Christianism.*

In those days, Christianism in Russia seemed to be in a war to the death with Communism. In some strange way, that war was now passing. Already, in fact, it seemed to have blown over. It had not been fought out and no truce had been declared. But one year the Communists were openly fighting the Church and the Church was fighting the Communists as openly as it dared, and the next year they were not.

I have never been in Russia and I do not assume to explain exactly what had happened. Those who have studied the situation in Russia most closely differ greatly in their explanations of everything. I shall simply speak of the happenings and let everybody explain them the way that suits him best. I should like to think that my book had had something to do with bringing about the change, but I have little evidence to support the notion.

The Russian Church, it must be remembered, was the Established Church of Russia. It had been for ages inextricably entangled with the State; and the Czar was the State.

Then one day there was no Czar. The State had been put in prison, or something, and then murdered, and in its place there had arisen a committee of workingmen.

That was a sure-enough dilemma for an Established Church. According to its creeds, workingmen

were mere children of God while a czar was a ruler by divine right, and, according to its habits of thought, any children of God who would assume to rule where a holy czar had been ruling must be children of the very devil. That workingmen were now the State did not and could not occur, at this time, to the bereft prelates.

They mourned their loss, but that seemed to be all that they could do. They surely could not function as the State Church when there was no State for them to function with. It was religiously necessary, it seemed, to get the State back first; but they could not get that particular State back, for he was dead. Naturally, a number of them did their best to put another czar in his place.

The committee of workingmen did not like that. It seems they did not want to have any czar: they wanted to be the State themselves. They did not claim divine right; they just claimed the right of the workers to rule.

They were so different from czars in this respect that good churchmen could see the difference plainly. Czars never ruled except by divine right. If God told them not to rule, they invariably quit ruling. God, to be sure, had always voted their way; but if He had voted against them, the czars would have gone to their knees in resignation, repeating, "Thy will be done."

These facts were all quite plain to the leading ecclesiasts of the Holy Orthodox Church of Russia. As the years rolled along, however, it became more and more apparent that they did not make any difference. The Czar remained just as dead as he ever was and the workingmen continued to be the State.

There was still a Church, but it was no longer an Established Church. There was still a state but it was no longer a czaristic state. What, then, should the Church do? Would it try to function in the State which actually existed or would it quit functioning altogether?

For a time it looked as though the Church would split; for one faction, calling itself the "Living Church," was in favor of dropping all antagonism to the government; while Tikhon, the Patriarch, took a different view. Just what he had in mind nobody could say, but he did not favor an immediate declaration.

Events, however, brought a great majority of the bishops to the point of view held by the Living Church advocates. There was no reason, then, except for the Patriarch's attitude, why this majority should secede. It stayed in the Church instead, and became the dominant voice of the Church; for in the course of time the Patriarch Tikhon died.

I knew all this in a general way, as I was preparing to make my trip to New York, but I was altogether surprised to hear of some subsequent developments.

My condemnation as a heretic, I learned, instead of being received in Russian Orthodox circles with universal rejoicing, was now received by many Russian prelates as most embarrassing news. I was a Communist, and Russia was being fast converted to Communism. No longer was the Russian Church teaching that the Czar ruled by divine right, and that one could not be a Communist and a Christian too. But there were still few, if any, out-and-out

Communists in high rank in the Church. The Church could surely use some, if they were truly religious; and even my book *Communism and Christianism,* it was felt by certain ecclesiastical strategists, might be read to advantage in certain circles. It might have a tendency to keep a lot of young hot-heads from openly ridiculing every symbol of religion.

Then, I learned, the text of my "Confession of Faith," as delivered to the Review Court, was being circulated in Russia. What effect it would have I could not guess; and so I sent it personally to the most authoritative spokesman of the Russian Orthodox Church with whom it was possible for me to get in touch.

To my surprise, he received it with enthusiasm, suggesting only that one word be changed. With that one change, which I was more than willing to make, since it seemed to express my idea more definitely than I had expressed it previously, he delivered his opinion that I was thoroughly orthodox.

Then he told me, if I were willing to go to Russia to have the ceremony performed, he would gladly receive me into the Russian Church and raise me to the orders of priest and bishop.

It was out of the question for me to go to Russia, but this was news indeed. If I were made a bishop in the Russian Church, I mused, what would become of the Review Court's recommendation that I be deposed from the sacred ministry? For my orders would still be recognized by the Protestant Episcopal Church, whether I were deposed or not. It was out of the question for me to go to Russia, but the very thought of it made me happy. Through my heresies, I reflected, I had not only come to a

deeper understanding of religion, but I was also on the way to higher ecclesiastical recognition too.

If I ever did become a Bishop in the Russian Church, I said, I would still remain an Episcopalian. I would demonstrate what heretofore we had only claimed, that we are all one Church. I would not raise the point, of course, of my Apostolic Succession. Such a course would ill behoove the author of *The Level Plan for Church Union;* nevertheless, on the part of no one, either in the Protestant Episcopal Church or out, would my Apostolic Succession be further questioned.

I told myself, of course, that I was dreaming wildly, but I enjoyed it, and I did not try to wake myself up. The events that followed proved to be even wilder than the dream, but I can not tell them now without getting ahead of my story.

I arrived in New York without any apparent physical damage, a few days before I was scheduled to speak. The newspapers had announced my coming and a few reporters called to interview me. The next morning, however, while the papers all had much Episcopalian news, there was nothing whatever about Bishop Brown.

There were long stories, I noted, about the "Cathedral Drive"—Bishop Manning's great movement to raise fifteen million dollars for his "House of Worship for All People"; and I learned from subsequent talks with the newspapermen that I was suspected of having timed my visit to New York in order to embarrass this movement as much as possible.

"The papers are all more or less in on the drive," one of the boys told me. "Manning is a sacred cow

just now in our office. I thought your coming here now was big stuff, but the boss canned it."

This all had to be translated to me. A "sacred cow," I learned, was journalistic jargon to designate any person or institution about whom, or which, only favorable notices might be printed; and the very mention of me, according to the way some of these reporters saw the situation, constituted a criticism of Bishop Manning.

"Our sheet won't do it," said another. "It would be too much like yelling 'Hurrah for Hell!' at a revival meeting."

XVI

A BISHOP BECOMES MY PUBLICITY MAN—WITH ASTONISHING RESULTS

I saw at once that I had a job on hand—a job which was perhaps more important than my address at St. Mark's.

The newspapers, I was sure, in spite of the misgivings of some of their own reporters, were not unfriendly to me, and were not setting out to suppress any real news. They had all covered my case when it was on the boards, and they had covered it fairly. *The New York Times,* citadel of conservatism though it might be, had sent a special representative to both hearings in Cleveland, and on its front page, daily, there had been the most clear-cut analysis of all the complexities of the case.

I had come to marvel at the skill of these reporters: coming, as they must have come, from assignments of a very different nature, they seemed able to jump at once into this entirely new realm of news, and to tell the story quite as plainly as though they had made a specialty of Episcopalian heresy trials. They might be Protestants, Catholics, Jews or infidels, but that seemed to make no difference. They made technical errors occasionally, but they had a passion for the truth; and I could not help contrasting them with certain scholarly types with a passion for technical accuracy and no regard whatever for the vital meaning of events.

And the papers which employed them—they might be "capitalistic" and all that, but when there was a story, I could not see that they were bent on hushing it up.

There was a story, I felt, in my coming to New York, but the newspapers were not to blame if they could not see it. After all, was I not playing the part of a publicity seeker? I could not deny it. Publicity was what I wanted. It was the only thing I wanted. I wanted publicity, not only for heresy but for orthodoxy. If the light were turned upon them, I knew, both heresy and orthodoxy would disappear. These things were mere obsessions of the mind. They were creatures of the darkness. But until the light was turned on, the Church would continue to act as though they were realities, and would thus be inhibited from doing its work.

Publicity, however, was the one thing which the other side did not want. Bishop Manning wanted publicity for the Cathedral Drive, and had put the matter in the hands of one of the greatest publicity agents in town; but he did not, I was sure, want publicity at this juncture for the case of William Montgomery Brown. From his point of view, I saw, he was perfectly correct. All sorts of people were contributing to the Cathedral; all sorts of non-Episcopalians too, including Catholics and Jews. "A House of Prayer for All People" was the inspiring slogan which was appearing on posters all over the city, and there was no special reason, from Bishop Manning's point of view, why my case should get into the limelight just then.

I, however, thought it would be exactly the right time: right now, in New York City, in April, 1925.

I was fascinated by that poster, "A House of Prayer for All People," and it was exactly what I wanted the Protestant Episcopal Church to be. I wanted it to be a place where orthodox and heretic could kneel together, where worshipers might or might not believe in supernaturalism, where theological differences would not count, but where Catholics, Protestants and Jews, Mohammedans and Buddhists and free-thinkers might unite in religious exercises, realizing that while their rationalizations of religion might be very different, all human life is one. Not one in theology, not one in opinion, but one in aspiration and one in effort to know the Truth.

In the meantime, I wanted such truth as was available to be known in New York City at this particular time. If the Protestant Episcopal Church did stand for this ideal, I wanted that proved. If it stood, rather, for the course taken by the two courts which had acted on my case, that should be understood instead. To me the two ideals did not seem to harmonize, but if they could be harmonized, I wanted that fact made known.

I certainly did not wish to antagonize Bishop Manning. I was in no mood to antagonize anybody, and if the editors had supposed that I had come there to embarrass him, or to embarrass any drive for a House of Worship for All People, they simply misunderstood. So I decided to enlighten them. I decided to enlighten everybody. I was particularly anxious that I should not be misunderstood by Bishop Manning.

So I wrote a long letter to Bishop Manning, notifying him of my intention of speaking at St. Mark's —I believe I said I was going to "preach," for I

had selected a text—but assured him that I was not in New York to take part in any controversy. I was there, I emphasized, to help put an end to controversy. I was heartily in sympathy, I told him, with the idea and the ideal of "A House of Prayer for All People," and I would do all I could, I promised, to help him realize his aim.

After all, I said, he and I differed only in our opinions; and it was only my opinions, not my religion, which had recently been under attack. My status as a bishop, also, had not been changed, for the judgment of the courts had not yet been officially affirmed; and I asked him to suggest any way in which he thought I might help him in the great work he was doing in New York.

Pending his answer, I suggested that it would be a most strategic move if he were to invite me to preach in the Cathedral.

"It is true," I said, "that I have been adjudged guilty of heresy, and it is quite possible that you concur in the judgment and intend, at the coming meeting of the House of Bishops, to vote for my expulsion from the Christian ministry. But such considerations, it seems to me, are quite irrelevant. Religion, we are both agreed, is deeper than intellectual belief; and the known divergence in our point of view, in case you were to invite me to speak in the Cathedral, would emphasize this truth, I believe, much better than it could be emphasized by anything which either of us could say."

I sent copies of this letter to all the newspapers, even before mailing it to Bishop Manning.

I discovered the next morning that the reporters were in error as to the unwillingness of their papers

to refer to my case just then. All of them published the letter, and most of them gave it a very prominent place.

Bishop Manning's answer was also given to the newspapers before it came to me. I heard about it first by telephone from various "city desks." It was a shock. It said nothing about my preaching in the Cathedral, but was in the form of an official command that I should not speak at St. Mark's or in any other Episcopal Church within the diocese of New York. Accompanying it was a copy of a similar order to Doctor Guthrie, forbidding him to permit me to speak at St. Mark's.

How slowly new ideas do take hold! Bishop Manning, it was evident, had not grasped it yet. He still seemed to think, in spite of all the demonstrations to the contrary, that the Church had some sort of case against me. But I could not blame him. I was still too fresh from my own wanderings in the clouds of orthodoxy to blame anybody for failure to face reality—least of all, a bishop. For thirty years I myself had gone about making solemn ecclesiastical noises and imagining that I had a case against such scientists as Darwin.

It all went to show, however, how necessary publicity is. If the real facts be kept before the people, everybody must observe them in time. The world's salvation, after all, does not depend upon preachers but upon reporters. They may not all be reporters on newspapers. They may be reporters in laboratories, reporters in industrial organizations, reporters in our social contacts—people who observe and tell how things actually act.

I was sorry, of course, that a bishop should act

in this particular way. I wanted to preach in St. Mark's. I had been emotionally uplifted by the very idea; and now, suddenly, it had become impossible. But it was not necessary for the world's salvation that I preach in St. Mark's, while it was necessary for the world's salvation that people should know exactly what was going on.

That being the case, I could not become exactly downhearted. If the newspapers would only tell what was happening, I felt, the knowledge of what was happening would be worth much more than anything I could say. And the newspapers told. They not only told it but they featured it. They printed Bishop Manning's injunction against Doctor Guthrie and me on the front pages, and many of them carried screaming headlines to call attention to it.

For several days I was sought by reporters at all hours of the day and night. I wrote another letter to Bishop Manning, which the papers printed in full. I thanked him for his prompt answer. I thanked him for sending it to the newspapers before sending it to me. His note to me referred to the fact that I had done the same thing, but he had not mentioned his appreciation.

Then I observed that he had not said anything in his letter concerning my preaching in the Cathedral —the matter which my letter to him had most emphasized—and so I would say nothing, I told him, in mine, concerning the matter which he had most emphasized; to wit, my *not* preaching in St. Mark's.

The newspapers printed this letter also, under sensational headlines. In the meantime, Doctor Guthrie gave out a statement to the effect that

Bishop Manning was superseding his authority in forbidding me to speak—not preach—in a symposium, which was no part of the official worship of the Church.

Reporters besieged me to find out what I would do. I could not tell them, exactly, because I did not know. Of one thing I was sure. I was not going to help Doctor Guthrie lose his job, or entangle him in any trial for insubordination. Whatever I did, I would do on my own responsibility. If he withdrew the invitation, all right. If he did not withdraw it, I would see to it somehow that he did not violate the bishop's orders on my account.

I would go to St. Mark's, I was sure of that. The Bishop had not ordered me not to attend the meeting. And I would speak if I could, but not on the church property. There was a little park, as I remembered it, right near the church, and I thought it might be a good idea to lead the audience into that, to hear the sort of sermon which a gagged heretic wanted to preach in church.

My memory, as a matter of fact, had played me a trick, and this little surprise party never came off. I had not been in New York in more than a decade, but Bishop Potter and I had been close friends; I had preached all over the diocese in raising money for my missionary enterprises and I thought I remembered all the churches well. My memory had conjured up another church, however, and on the Sunday in question it rained so hard that an outdoor meeting would have been impossible anyway.

Still, it was quite a party. St. Mark's was crowded an hour before the meeting, and five thousand peo-

ple, I was told, were turned away. All the newspapers were represented at the press table. I was given such an ovation, upon my entrance, as I had never dreamed of. But I did not speak. Doctor Guthrie outlined my case from his point of view. Professor Schroeder presented it in its psychological aspects, and Doctor Lynch, Doctor Guthrie's assistant, read my "Confession of Faith."

I do not know how the audience would have voted on the question stated: "Do Heresy Trials Accomplish Any Good?" But I know how I should have voted. All this could never have happened, had the bishops decided to ignore *Communism and Christianism* instead of presenting me for trial; and while it was not exactly a trial, those proceedings which were generally referred to as a trial had surely accomplished much.

It was announced at the close of this meeting that Reverend Doctor John Haynes Holmes, pastor of the Community Church, had extended an invitation for me to deliver the address there which Bishop Manning had forbidden me to deliver here, and that I had accepted the invitation for the following Wednesday night.

The reader can imagine what this and the following experiences meant to me. Only a year before, out in Galion, I had thought myself deserted. Even my sanity had been questioned; while those who really agreed that I was correct in my attitude toward theology still thought me most eccentric because I wished to stay in the Church. The New Idea was not dawning so slowly after all. And people were not uninterested. Thanks to my prosecutors and judges, and to Bishop Manning, it had

now become a feature in the daily news. Sooner or later, I felt sure, the world would adjust itself to the revelation of to-day, but even with the progress it was already making, it was just great to be alive in it.

The meeting at the Community Church was even larger than the one in St. Mark's. That church also was filled to overflowing long before the opening hour, and the police were kept busy keeping the streets open outside.

In the meantime, I had given the banned sermon to the papers, and they printed it, almost in full, on Thursday morning. Still, the reporters were again present and wrote columns about the meeting beside. *The Herald-Tribune,* I remember, devoted eight columns to the story.

Doctor Holmes presided. If taken literally, what he said about me was undoubtedly unscientific; but in so far as I symbolized this New Idea, it was quite admissible. At any rate, it felt good—to me. "We love Bishop Brown," I can still hear him saying. "We love him because he is a saint and reverence him because he is a heretic."

My attorney, Joseph W. Sharts, was the chief speaker. Before he had talked five minutes, everybody realized that I was not a visionary old dodo, incapable of practical moves, but a gentleman of astute judgment—especially in the selection of my attorneys.

My "sermon" was as simple a religious appeal as I could make—simple because stripped of theology. Everybody in my audience, I knew, yearned for the larger life. They were not different in this respect from me, nor from my fellow bishops. All were

yearning for the realization of that which we called "The Kingdom of God," but none of us would assume to say exactly what that kingdom was.

According to the New Testament story, even Jesus had not literally defined the kingdom. He had spoken of it in symbols—in parables. But he had suggested the way to realize it. It was the way of this text—Seek.

This also was the way of science, I had come to see. But it was not the way which I had been trained as a theologian to follow.

The theologian says: "God is like this. Here is the correct concept and you deviate from it at your peril. Note the label. Observe that this God has been officially examined and approved. None genuine without this signature."

This, I tried to point out, is not only an unscientific way to go about the job, and it is not only in direct violation of these directions which have been attributed to Jesus: it is a futile and an impossible way of attaining anything.

For "God," however we may try to fix him in our minds, will not stay put. When I was a child I used to think of him—and in my childish fancy it was necessary that I think of him—as a sort of exaggerated man with a long, white beard. When I grew older, God lost that beard. But that was not something that happened to God: it was only something that had happened to me. As I became still more mature, he not only became beardless but bodiless, and eventually lost all human attributes altogether—individuality, personality, consciousness.

But I had survived the change, I testified, and had no reason to suspect that God had not. In fact, only

as I kept on seeking, had I found anything worth while. For Life is not a single revelation which can be fixed in a single formula. It is a progressive revelation, a continual seeking and finding. The important thing in a man's religious experience is not that he shall have the correct conception of God—for that is absolutely impossible for our finite minds—but that he shall have a greater conception of God to-day than he had yesterday.

This was my first attempt to make a public speech in many years. I never was much of a speaker, and I was aware at the time that my voice was very weak and my delivery was awkward. But it seemed that there was not a whisper throughout the great auditorium. Everybody was straining to hear, and my poor words, I knew, were sinking in as nothing that I had ever said in my orthodox days had done.

But the climax of the meeting was not in anything that any of us said. The climax—to me, at least—was in the act of a young prelate whose purple robes signified arch-episcopal orders, who now advanced to the center of the platform and pronounced the Apostolic Benediction.

This was the Most Reverend William H. Francis, Archbishop and ranking prelate in America, of the Old Catholic Church.

It was then I first realized that I had won my case.

XVII

I BECOME AN OLD CATHOLIC BISHOP, TOO

Technically, my status had not changed. I was still a convicted criminal, so far as the Protestant Episcopal Church was concerned; with the sentence still hanging over me that I be deposed from the sacred ministry. No Episcopalian voice, except Doctor Guthrie's, had yet been raised in my defense; and my Church, I felt, would not readily be moved from its determined course even by this public appearance with me of such a dignitary as Archbishop Francis. It was not as though the Roman Catholic Church had officially blessed my stand; for, while the Old Catholic Church, in the minds of Episcopalian ecclesiasts, was technically on a par with Rome, as an actual organization it was little known. My objectives had by no means been yet attained; nevertheless, like Moses, I saw a vision of the promised land, and the beautiful scene quite overpowered me.

There was Doctor Holmes, champion of liberalism, one of the world's great spirits, a thoroughly modern American completely liberated from superstition but carrying on his great religious work in New York City with pentecostal fervor. His character was known throughout the world. It had been tested in the ordeal of war. He had not been imprisoned, but he had been hated and persecuted by all the powers that be, by a militaristic State and

by all the sycophants of the day who were caught in the war hysteria which the militarists had kindled, and he had stood up against the storm. He had not bowed the knee to Baal, or to Mars; but because he had dared the unpopularity which such defiance entailed, his real leadership among men had become all the more apparent.

And there was this cosmopolitan audience, men and women from every walk of life and of every sort of religious belief; Professors from the universities; Jewish women from the garment trades; here and there a distinguished face which all New York recognized, and faces just as distinguished whom nobody knew—Negroes, perhaps, or Italian workingmen, eager young Socialists and Communists and I. W. W.'s; and eminently respectable citizens whose faces betrayed, when Mr. Sharts began to speak, that they had no sympathy with the whole proceedings, but who joined in the general applause before he got through: here they were, all uniting at last in what was to me the most uplifting religious service I had ever attended.

And there was Archbishop Francis giving upon this audience the blessing of the Church!

Why not? The words were sweetly familiar words to me, but few in this audience could be bound by the words. It was the reality behind the words—the mysterious reality of human one-ness which these dear old words so beautifully symbolized.

". . . and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen!"

On the other hand, from the literal, ecclesiastical, Protestant Episcopal point of view, this was not a religious meeting at all; the Community Church was

not a Church and the Reverend Doctor John Haynes Holmes was not a minister. Nevertheless, I was a bishop in good standing still, even from that point of view, and Archbishop Francis was a real archbishop.

Technically again, I knew, he could not recognize me as a bishop, although I was bound by my Church traditions to recognize him. But this technicality separated us not at all. I knew and he knew that, in spite of all traditions and in spite of all theologies, and whether God were the Spirit which the Archbishop conceived him to be, or a symbol of the All-in-All of Existence which I conceived him to be, we were now united in the service of God.

I spent a number of days with Archbishop Francis in New York. He too studied my "Confession of Faith" and he too recognized it as orthodox; and he was not at all surprised that Russian prelates had been impressed by it.

The Eastern Orthodox Churches, he said, had been much freer from literalism than the Churches of the West. They might be even more ritualistic; but it was generally understood among their educated clergy that the Creeds were symbols of their faith rather than a literal expression of it.

At about this time I received a mysterious letter which corroborated what the Archbishop had said. It was a copy of a letter to Bishop Manning, and was evidently in reply to an inquiry sent out by him. Underneath the letter were the written words "Certified by Father Anthony." The letter itself was signed "Mar Timotheus, Orthodox Catholic Bishop, Metropolitan, Bethe Garme."

Here is the letter in full. If it seems mystifying,

the reader may be assured that it was equally mystifying to me.

> Answering your request as to what constitutes heresy in the strict Catholic and Apostolic sense as it is regarded, I wish to state that the Ecumenical Councils make clear the procedure, but before them, one may take the Council of Nicea as the authority for precedent that a Bishop or Presbyter can only be deposed after an Ecumenical Council has defined the heresy and found accused guilty. From the records of the Bishop Brown trial it appears that the offense is more of insubordination to the House of Bishops than heresy, for no single communion to-day has any power to define heresy, as this is purely a function of an Ecumenical Council. The Episcopal Church might have authority to say whether Bishop Brown is entitled to a seat in its House, or to say whether they consider him one of their number, but there is no canonical authority by which he can be deposed or deprived of his spiritual authority as a Bishop until an Ecumenical Council has so found him guilty of heresy. If the Episcopal Church claims to be an Apostolic Catholic Church with valid orders in true succession, then its Bishops are bound by the ancient canons in this matter. This case is a challenge to the Episcopal Church to definitely establish the character of its orders and to come out in the open as to whether it is Catholic or Protestant.

I did not know who Mar Timotheus was, but Archbishop Francis told me that he was regarded as one of the greatest ecclesiastical authorities of Eastern Christendom.

Little by little it dawned upon me that my fellow bishops were beginning to look into my case. They gave no evidence anywhere that they supposed I

had one, but it was good to know that they were beginning to look. My question "What is Heresy?" might seem impudent, but it had dawned upon the bishops, apparently, that it might be well to answer it.

Then I remembered that the Review Court was still working on that written opinion which was to make everything clear. Three months had passed and nothing had been heard from it yet. Whatever ecclesiastical sanction it might get from other sources, here was one authority, at least, upon whom it could hardly rest its case. Ecclesiasticism had meant little to me. I had been appealing from ecclesiasticism to common sense, and that ecclesiasticism too should line up on my side was decidedly refreshing.

This was April, and the House of Bishops would meet in New Orleans, in October. The Bishops would know by that time what my case was all about. They would know, not only that I had not been tried for heresy, but that it would be impossible to try me. The Review Court, I reflected, will have learned that heresy can not be defined; and it may even have learned from other authorities than Mar Timotheus, that it is not within the province of any single communion even to attempt to define it.

On the other hand, I reflected, ideas percolate very slowly through the official mind, when officialdom has once turned that mind in a certain specified direction. Two courts had convinced me that my fellow bishops were determined to depose me from the ministry. They intended to do it at first, no doubt, in an honest, straightforward and expeditious manner. They could not be as expeditious as they had hoped, and they could not be straightforward,

they discovered, at all; but that had not deterred them. They still held loyally to their original course. For what they were going to do, no doubt, they still hoped to find some sanction; if they failed to find any sanction, might they not do it anyway? I had to admit that they might.

How I wished that I could have gone to Russia, there to receive an ordination to the episcopacy which no Protestant Episcopal authority would dare to question.

But I did not have to go to Russia. I went to Archbishop Francis instead, and Archbishop Francis outlined a course which would not only make it impossible for the Church to depose me, but would work at the same time for Church unity in America in a way which, when known, would arouse the enthusiasm of thousands of Episcopalians.

That is the course which I followed. I am still as certain as ever that it will succeed. It may take another year, or it may take ten, and I may even die before the complete attainment of the objectives which were then outlined. But I know we shall attain them; and when I say "we" I include in that collective pronoun the bishops and clergymen and laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

A few months later, in June, 1925, I was hypothetically baptized and taken into the communion of the Old Catholic Church in America. But I did not renounce my membership in the Protestant Episcopal Church. I retained it and cherished it. I became, in fact, a more ardent Episcopalian than I had ever been before, and never have its services and its sacraments meant more to me than they have meant since then.

What followed could not have happened by the sole authority of Archbishop Francis. He had to take the matter up with his auxiliary bishops first, but I passed in every way the examination which they demanded: whereupon the Archbishop consecrated me, first to all the lower orders of the Catholic ministry and then into the orders of deacon, priest, and bishop.

This happened in Galion, at my own home, in the little chapel in connection with Brownella Cottage, consecrated for the purpose by the Archbishop himself. Originally, it is interesting to note, this building had been a Roman Catholic Church.

I did not make this consecration public at the time. I did not want it to influence the bishops. They had a problem on their hands. They had convicted me as a heretic and had recommended my deposition, and now they had got around to asking what heresy is. They had already found out, it seems, that they could not find out—that was a job, at best, for an Ecumenical Council—and I was anxious that they should voluntarily retrace their steps in the light of their own discoveries.

I did not want a "victory" over my fellow bishops, and when I say that, I think that people generally will take me at my word. But this was not due to any saintliness on my part. It was simply because a "victory" would not accomplish the desired end. Victories do not tend toward understanding, and I wanted them to understand. That was all I wanted. There was a great work to be done; and all that stood in the way of its being done was misunderstanding. If they understood, I knew they would co-

operate; but if they were simply defeated, they would not.

In the meantime, I did not want to be defeated. That, too, would keep them from coöperating. So long as the case was kept on the boards, they would have to keep on thinking about it; but let it once be closed and they would close their minds entirely. Those minds were never exactly open, but the lids on some of them must have been pried loose, and I did not want the process interrupted by the shock of either victory or defeat.

But now I had no cause for worry. They could not depose me. They could not carry out the program they were determined to carry out. With that assured, I could afford not to mention it. I could afford to plead my case in all humility instead; and if they saw it at last and were convinced, the resultant understanding would be sweeter than any victory could possibly be.

Then, there was the forthcoming opinion of the Review Court to consider. That Court, for all I knew, may already have confessed its inability to define my crime. If so, it would be tantamount to saying: "We find the defendant guilty but are unable to say what he is guilty of." I did not see, to be sure, how it could annul its own decision; but until my judges did report, there was no reason why I should further complicate the situation for them.

So I said nothing, at the time, about my consecration, but I said all I could about the great aim I had in view. Not my own vindication, for I felt that I had been vindicated; not my own retention in the ministry, for my holy orders could not now be

disturbed, but about the vision of a reunited Church: accepting the revelation of to-day as well as the revelation of yesterday; seeing the Christ not merely in a Book but in suffering humanity everywhere; facing reality in a real world and working for the attainment of actual glories here, instead of exhausting its very real energies in the most unreal task of resuscitating the faded glories of the hereafter.

I was consecrated as a Bishop in the Old Catholic Church on the twenty-sixth anniversary of my former elevation to the episcopacy. So far from repudiating my former allegiance, I made it a joint ceremony, an anniversary celebration as well as the beginning of a new epoch in my ministry.

The Archbishop permitted me to preach my own ordination sermon; and although I knew I would have but a dozen listeners, I tried to make it the most complete possible statement of the revelation which had freed me from my ancient literalism but, instead of causing me to break with the Church, had made the Church seem more important to me than it had ever been before.

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets," was my text. "I am not come to destroy but to fulfill."

I had never understood that in my orthodox ministry. I could not make it mean anything to me. The old law "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" was clearly at variance with the injunction of Jesus: "Resist not evil." One of them must be right, I thought, and the other wrong. As an orthodox literalist, it was impossible to reach any other conclusion.

In the light of the new revelation, however, how different it all seemed. These were not two laws: they were simply two stages in man's ascent toward consciousness and his understanding of his relations to his fellow men.

When he understood nothing of those relations, he had no concept of justice. When he was injured, it did not occur to him to return the injury in kind: all that occurred to him was to retaliate with all the injury he could inflict.

But people could not live together on any such basis, and, eventually, the concept of justice dawned. This marked a wonderful step forward in human progress, a step for which "Moses" is the Christian symbol. "Jesus" symbolizes a still further step. Whether he was or was not an historical character matters not. What matters is that some one saw, and therefore all humanity would some day see, that man can not attain to the fullness of human life on this Mosaic principle. Love, not justice, must be the principle upon which human relations shall be built.

But it was all one law—this law of human relations. Moses and Jesus were but progressive revelations of it. But modern science goes still farther. It sees things which Jesus could not have seen. He had some faint intuition, apparently, of evolution: still, he seems to have believed, with his times, that there were angels and devils back of the stage pulling the strings which made human beings act.

This new human society, he seems to have felt, would have to come miraculously. We do not know. No one can tell to-day how far the original drama has been doctored to suit Christian ecclesiastical tastes. Nevertheless, its truths stand out; and they

stand out more clearly to-day than ever before. With each new revelation, in fact, the old revelations are all the more illuminated.

"Oh, for the vision of a Jesus," I said in that sermon, "in these days of supposed conflict between the new and the old! Oh, for an eye so clear that we can not only take notice of the happenings about us, and not only turn our faces in confidence toward the future, but also look with comprehending reverence upon the source from which that future flows.

"Only in this spirit can there be true consecration. If we consecrate ourselves to a code, even to the code of Jesus, life will surely lose its meaning; for with each succeeding revelation, new codes must surely come. And if we consecrate ourselves merely to an ideal, we may be tricked by our own mental images into a lifelong chase of unreality. But if we consecrate ourselves to the living, changing truth, then and then only can we truly kneel with Jesus, recognizing that past, present and future are one, that God is reality and that reality is God, and pray in the ecstasy of complete abandonment: 'Nevertheless, not my will but thy will be done'."

I feel justified in quoting a few more paragraphs from that sermon; for while it was sent to the newspapers and given some publicity, no one knew at the time of the events which had inspired it. A quatrain of Edwin Markham's might have been my text. I did not know Mr. Markham, and I knew that he must be entirely unaware of this event, but the poem seemed to me to have been written for the occasion.

> He drew a circle that shut me out—
> Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.

But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in!

"Various sects," I said, "may wish to exclude me, but they can not compel me to exclude them. I can worship with them all. I can join them all. I can be a Methodist and a Mohammedan and a Hindu. I can be a Protestant and a Catholic in Christ. For the reality behind all their concepts is one reality, and the truth which they are all seeking is one truth.

"The truth is eternal but it is not static. It flows like a river; and, like a river, it flows throughout its whole course at once. The sources of the river do not stop while the more majestic expanses below move on to the sea. The fact that the river is deep and wide, and that it carries the commerce of the world, does not do away with the fact that it is also a turbulent mountain stream.

"We see one aspect of the river and we say with good reason, 'The river is like this.' The revelation is perfectly valid, for the river is like that. But it is also like something entirely different. That, in fact, is what makes it a river. It is a river because it is in a state of constant flux. It remains what it is, in any aspect, because it is forever becoming something else.

"This is the law of life—the law to which we must conform if life is to be realized. This law is eternal, but it is ever changing. If it were not changing, it could not be eternal, for there is nothing constant except change. Past, present and future can not be separated. Take away the past, and there would be no future. Take away the future and there could be no past. They are both present; and if both were not present, there could be no present.

"In this law of God, made manifest to us through Moses, Jesus and modern science, all conflicts are resolved. By this revelation, we know truly that there is no death. For all eternity is with us. It is flowing through us at this holy moment. He that believeth, he that truly realizeth, hath eternal life.

"It is to this living truth that I would kneel in consecration. I do not want to enter into any petty contract with any God or any sect. I do not want to promise, even to the Christian God or the Christian Church, so many hours in exchange for a parcel of eternity, with such and such specifications, to be delivered to the party of the first part at death. I would not haggle with the Almighty and call it a religious service. I would lose myself, rather, in this more abundant life. I would mingle with the eternal current. I would seek to know and to do the will of Him who is, was and ever shall be; and, in blessed consciousness that His law can not be destroyed and His word shall not pass away, I would go forth upon the glorious adventure of life, unfettered and unafraid."

XVIII

A LETTER FROM A PROSTITUTE

People may have supposed, during the next few months, that I was fighting a lost cause. It was not known that I had become a bishop, in a more widely recognized sense than I had ever been a bishop before. Nevertheless, it must have been noticed that I was in no wise a discouraged man.

Invitations to speak poured in upon me, and I began to accept them. I enjoyed the work hugely. Railroad travel did not tire me. Because of Mrs. Brown's health, I had to limit my activities, but I returned from trips to Chicago, Boston and other cities in better physical condition than when I left.

My speaking during this period was confined largely to labor gatherings, especially the International Workers' Aid and the International Labor Defense. My writing was confined largely to letters to my fellow bishops and to delegates to the coming triennial General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

The bishops and the delegates, I suspect, did not always read my letters. At any rate, they almost never answered them. Somehow, the impression had gone abroad that my case had been disposed of; and though I did my best to save them from this error, I received few assurances that they saw what I was driving at.

There was one exception, however. This was

Bishop Paul Jones, formerly of Utah, who had resigned his diocese during the war rather than surrender to the demands of militarism. His had been a missionary diocese, and his resignation had deprived him of either a voice or a vote in the House of Bishops. Nevertheless, the war hysteria had now largely subsided, many churchmen had become heartily ashamed of their former attitude and Bishop Jones' position in the Church was seemingly stronger than ever.

Bishop Jones did not share my extreme revolutionary views, nor did he agree with what seemed to him to be my "materialistic" philosophy; also, he had more to lose than any other bishop could have had by coming to my defense. Nevertheless, he came.

There is only one possible explanation for his conduct; and that is that Paul Jones was that sort of person. He believed that my conviction was a blunder, and he said so, and what it might have cost him to say so never seemed to enter his mind. Some people are like that; and a Church which here and there develops such a character is by no means hopeless, however timid its temporary administration may seem to be.

Bishop Jones did not know at the time that the Old Catholic Church had recognized me in the way it had. The only Protestant Episcopal clergyman who did know this was the Reverend Doctor Whatham, who had witnessed the ceremonies. What effect this news might have had upon the rest of the Church, or what effect it might have had even upon the written opinion with which the Review Court was still struggling, I can not conjecture. As it was,

Bishop Jones' defense fell mainly on deaf ears; and the scoldings he received in the Church papers convinced me that Episcopal officialdom was still very much in the dark.

My name was in the newspapers frequently enough, but not in a way which was adroitly calculated to gain partisans among the bishops. It appeared, usually, in connection with what they called Communist demonstrations; one of them a great mass-meeting of Negro workers in Chicago.

Again it appeared in connection with a letter I had written to a New York prostitute. This poor girl had written to me, signing herself "A Lost Episcopalian." It was an angry, hurt letter, but I felt sure it was genuine. As she had given no name or address, I tried to reach her through the columns of the *New York American,* which printed most of her letter and my reply.

Here is the letter, received shortly after my first visit to New York, but not published until several weeks later.

Dam Fool:—

I am writing with my left hand as you are not worthy of my identity. I wrote you a letter but I fear you never received it as I was not sure of the address, so I am writing another which I hope you will get. I was baptized in the Church and came from a Christian family to big N.Y. Following arrival here I have strayed from the straight and narrow path which my dear church taught me. I am not what I should be now, no. I am only a prostitute. God forgive me. Ah! but how dear the memory of my dear church, rector and bishop. I have to pause and brush the tears away as I recall the sweet words of the dear bishop at confirmation. I

wonder how the little Episcopalians who you have confirmed feel toward you when they see you acting the way you are. What is the trouble with you anyway, trying to teach and talk as you are doing. In the Litany you have asked God many times to keep you from heresy and still you proceed in your wickedness. Shame on you. You are a church wrecker on your way to hell and you won't have long to wait by the looks. You ought to have a *bomb* dropped on your head. Maybe you will get it yet. Poor Bishop Manning is trying so hard to complete the Cathedral (which means a crown for his worthy head) and this is the time you select to raise hell and make an ass of yourself. He is not saying a word in defense so I am talking for him. It hurts me beyond expression to see my church and clergy rapped so *please don't* do it. If you don't like the church, don't try to bring public disgrace on it. Leave it and go where you do like it and keep your mouth *shut*. If you are looking for notoriety find it elsewhere besides the church. Have you no respect for the church or God? I don't think the minister where you spoke on Wed. eve. has much "spirit" in his soul or he would see your devilishness. He has no respect for his Church to allow applauding in it and turn it into auditorium. Believe me, I consider myself more than you for I love the memory of my dear Church and God although I can not serve him. I think you had better brace up and get ready for eternity which you are soon to face. Please do not hurt the church and clergy any more. I want you to *think* about this letter, for I mean all that I am saying. I think it is sad when a common prostitute has to quote to you.

A Lost Episcopalian.

I have never received a criticism which affected me more poignantly. I had, in some way, given

offense to this unknown, suffering child; and I longed to set myself right with her more intensely than I found myself longing to clear things up with the bishops.

To be sure, she had no voice or vote in the House, and her reasoning did not impress me. But behind that reasoning there were precious human qualities —loyalty, reverence, aspiration, religion—qualities with which we churchmen ought to be dealing more effectively.

It was not merely that orthodoxy had failed in her case; for heresy, it was apparent, had scored a similar failure. Seemingly, she had heard me preach. She had spoken of the applause, which seemed to her so improper in a church; and several remarks concerning my looks indicated that she had studied them firsthand. But I had not awakened in her any human hope. I had not given her any vision of salvation.

All that I had done was to hurt her, by seeming to discount that which she held most sacred. If her Christianity had been of any practical use to her, I reasoned, she would have gone on using it, and would not have been particularly perturbed by my skepticism.

If she had an automobile, for instance, and knew by experience just how good a machine it was, nobody's skepticism in the matter would annoy her in the least. But this thing, about which I was so skeptical, had not worked in her case. It had failed her in the greatest crisis of her young womanhood: it had failed to keep her out of prostitution, just as it had failed to keep the whole Christian world out of war.

In a sense she *was* speaking for the bishops after all. An attitude toward God, which had ended in miserable failure as far as the actual life of the world was concerned, had been sentimentally packed away in perfume as a sacred memory, and no heretic could lay his rough hands upon it without incurring the wrath of those he least wished to offend.

Through her, I came to understand the bishops better. I had challenged them to define their grievance, and had rather smugly suggested that they quit crying if they could not do it: now I began to sympathize with their inability to define it. They were hurt, it seemed, much in the same way that this poor girl was hurt; and to argue that they ought not to be hurt was a rather pointless procedure.

And yet how impossible it seemed to deal with their distress. I might write to the bishops, and keep on writing to them; but all that I could write was words, and they needed something deeper than words. It was the same with the girl. I did write to her, through the newspaper, but even if she read the letter (and I never learned whether she did or not) I knew that it could have little meaning in her life.

Here, if anywhere, was Christ. Here was a living sacrifice, outraged not only in body but in soul, for the sins of the world. People would glibly say that she had gone wrong, and her own tortured brain would itself subscribe to this indictment. But that meant nothing, in the light of the new revelation. Science did not ask whether man deserved to be saved; science concerned itself only with whether we wanted to be.

In the old days, if there was a famine or a plague,

nothing much could be done about it until God was appeased. It was assumed that he wanted to punish somebody or he would not have sent this affliction; and while human suffering was a pretty tough thing to think about, the question was nowhere near as important as this business of making God comfortable.

But when science took the reins, there was a new deal all around. It did not prove all at once that there was no God, but it looked out for humans and let God look out for himself. It abolished the famines when it could and irreverently chased away the plagues.

And so, in this girl's case, I could not become interested in what God wanted her to do. According to orthodoxy, she was not doing it anyway. The thing that interested me was that she was not doing what *she* wanted to do. If human beings were only free to live the lives they really want to live, they would not become slaves and masters, serfs and millionaires, hunters and hunted, victors and victims; but since they can live humanly only by developing human contacts, they should go ahead and develop them in a human way.

But I realized, when I tried to write to her, that there was little chance of her finding the human way to live in the America she was actually living in. There was something horribly inhuman about that America. It was all divided up into classes. Theoretically, we might all be children of the same Father; actually, we were not on speaking terms.

Some of us had money, and all of us had to have. If we had no money, we could not live. We did not have to get it honestly. We could have others earn

it for us, as I was doing, and then we could get it by the simple process of having the law take it away from them. The laws had always been like that. They had always taken the product of labor away from the laborers and given it to those who, because they now had the wealth, became too good to labor. And the result was that everybody was scheming to get what he could and to hold what, by hook or crook, he had managed to get.

In the resulting mêlée, some of us had become bishops and some had become prostitutes. The Scrantons had become rich out in Cleveland, and Bill Brown, ex-farmhand, had hooked onto a slice of those riches and become a pillar of society.

This money itself was of no value. It was of value only as it gave him a mortgage upon other people's labor. For all I know, this girl might once have been working for me. A person who lives on an income in America can never tell just what persons are being underpaid in order to keep that income coming in. It might have been my dividends, taken out of her wages, which made it seem to her that she could not dress like other girls. Then she found a way—a way which she had been told, above all things, not to find—and all that she cherished in her own being presently died, and she had lived thereafter only on the memory of it.

A good many of my close friends thought it queer of me that I should be out making speeches during this period to revolutionary labor gatherings. Consistently they refused to see any connection between my religion and my communist views; and even my personal attorney, Mr. Bushnell, declared in a printed summary of my case that I was not really a

Communist. But right or wrong, I saw a connection. This girl helped me to see it.

She did not need orthodoxy, for she already had it. And she did not need mere heresy; for it seemed that many girls in exactly her predicament must be decidedly unorthodox. What she needed, and what they all needed, was a different kind of society. What they needed was a social revolution. America was now organized around money; and if the possibilities of human life were to be realized here, it would have to be reorganized, from the bottom up, upon an altogether different principle.

It would be easy to argue, if one got any comfort out of it, that the capitalist system was the best of all systems the world had ever known, and that workers get more money out of it than they have ever managed to get out of any other. But there was no comfort to me in such a point of view. The fact still stuck out that this capitalist system was unfriendly, that it set us struggling against each other in order to get along; and that the struggle was so intense in America that all the most precious qualities in human life were everywhere being put up for sale. Artists were selling their enthusiasms. Preachers were selling their convictions. Prophets were selling their very visions, just as this young woman was selling her young womanhood.

I am not an economist. Naturally, holding the views I do, I want to believe what I have heard so many industrial engineers and deep students of our present social structure assert: that this competitive struggle, this fight against each other, uses up nine-tenths of our energies and that only one-tenth is left for the actual service of mankind. They tell me,

and I do believe them, that we would be ten times better off in material goods if we would scrap the competitive system and establish coöperation in its place.

But I can not prove that they are right. There may be a hitch in their figures somewhere. It might be that we would not work so hard if competition did not drive us to it. Perhaps, for all I know, we would only be five times better off materially than we are to-day, or only twice as rich, or only just a little richer as a result of the whole upset. I know, however, that we would be infinitely better off, in all the things that count for most in the making of human life, if we were to abandon this system which sets us against each other and inaugurate one in which there would be no classes, no privileges and no opportunity to thrive individually at the expense of our fellow men.

This girl, for all I know, might be living in material luxury, but she was not living an abundant life. She had the desire, and she had made the effort, but she had lost her way. At best, I could not find it for her unless I could introduce her into a friendly, human world. Believe me, there was a very direct connection at this time between my religion and my revolutionary propaganda.

I could not urge her to ignore the forces which were driving her against her will to a life which she hated to live; and I could not promise her, if she would do this, that she would still manage to arrive in that heaven of her imagination, which had already proven so unsubstantial and untrustworthy. No—if there was to be an abundant life for her, it must be a life with living men and women. This was the

only real redemption with which any living human being, even a bishop, could have anything whatever to do.

Of course I wrote in as friendly a way as I could. I remember that I called her "Mary," explaining that "Mary" was only a symbol for the reality whom I did not know. And I urged her to seek "God"—as a symbol, of course, of all the reality there is. I told her about Mary Magdalene, who was said to be possessed by "devils": a symbol, again, of the forces at work in society to keep us from realizing the abundant life. And I told her of Jesus—the symbol of eternally suffering humanity, who would yet rise and redeem us from the ignorance and prejudice and bigotry of a world still dominated by Mammon.

I do not know whether "Mary" ever read my letter or not. But I thought of her many times. I thought of her when I was writing to the bishops; and I thought of her when I addressed those revolutionary meetings. I had a job on my hands—the job of convincing the Protestant Episcopal Church that it was getting in wrong on this heresy business—and my friends wondered why I did not stick to it. They wondered why I should seize upon this, of all times, to advertise the fact that I was a Communist.

But I thought of "Mary" and let them wonder. Also, I did not want to have my conviction overruled simply because it was not logical. I wanted the Church to see. I wanted it to see a real world which needed a real salvation, and not merely decide to tolerate an old nuisance simply because it could not find a way to get rid of him.

XIX

I PLAN FOR A PARTY IN NEW ORLEANS

Technically, I was in a strange situation. The Review Court had recommended that the House of Bishops depose me from the ministry—a thing which I knew could not be done.

Even if I had not received Old Catholic orders, it was difficult to see how such a recommendation could be carried out. "Once a bishop, always a bishop," was the universally accepted tradition of our Church; and to say that I was no longer in orders was equivalent to saying that I had never had them. The Church might discipline me, it might restrain me, it might do all it could to keep me from functioning as a bishop: nevertheless, if the theory of Apostolic Succession were to be taken seriously, my orders were indelible and could not be erased. No matter what the Church did, then, and no matter what it commanded me not to do, it must continue to recognize me as a bishop; and if I were to violate its orders, and confirm a class, or ordain some layman to the ministry, it must recognize the proceedings as perfectly valid episcopal acts.

It must have seemed absurd, of course, that I should harp upon this point. The most extreme heretic who had ever come down the pike was seemingly taking the most extremely orthodox point of view. Liberals and Modernists in the Church had

long since ceased to trade in Apostolic Succession. A priest, in their minds, either made good or he did not, and if he made good, Apostolic Succession was not worth quibbling over; and if he did not make good, his Apostolic Succession could not amount to very much.

These good people were much more interested in helping folks live good lives than they were in getting them validly confirmed. To be perfectly candid, I felt much that way myself. But the charges against me had nothing to do with a good or a bad life. The charges concerned nothing but my heresies, and the punishment proposed concerned nothing but my ecclesiastical position.

I did not invent ecclesiasticism. It was the Review Court which had raised the issue, on account of my alleged heresies; and it was their business, I felt, to be orthodox if they could. If the Church were willing to repudiate the whole doctrine of Apostolic Succession, I should have been perfectly satisfied. That would put it on an even footing with the Methodists and the other denominations, and my Level Plan for Church Union might yet be adopted. But it could not retain the doctrine, I said, as an excuse for holding itself superior to these other denominations, and then conveniently set it aside as an excuse for getting rid of me.

I was not inconsistent. I believed in Apostolic Succession, although not in the literal way in which the dogma was ordinarily accepted. I believed that the genuine prophets and apostles of to-day are the true successors to the genuine prophets and apostles of all time, not only in the Jewish and the Christian faiths but in all the others. And such orders, I

knew, were indelible. If I were truly in that succession, no court and no House of Bishops could do anything whatever about it.

I went even farther in this belief than did any churchman on the other side. For I believed that successors might and should go much farther than their predecessors. It was the business of the Christian Church, as I saw it, not merely to preserve such formulas as had been handed down to it, but to improve upon those formulas; not merely to report the teachings of Jesus but to fulfill them; not merely to copy any Master but to create new masterpieces.

The thing I liked most in the Jesus story was that, while not repudiating Moses, he did not ape him. And the thing I wanted most of the Christian Church was that it should cease trying to ape Jesus but go on, in the spirit of Jesus, to the truths that even Jesus could not know. It could not reproduce him anyway; and its attempts to do so had perennially resulted, not in imitation, but in travesty. It could not even reproduce the Apostles; and the successor to Peter, who has nothing more than his succession to Peter to recommend him, is at best a most ridiculous figure. He may be a Simon-pure bishop, but all who observe him rightfully ask, "What of it?"

But I had not come, I felt, to destroy the doctrine of Apostolic Succession. I did not want it destroyed; I wanted it fulfilled. It was the literal supporters of that doctrine who were now trying to destroy it, so I did my best to keep a straight face while I pointed out to them what they were doing.

I wrote letter after letter to the delegates to the Convention which was soon to meet; but the pres-

ervation of Apostolic Succession was not heavy on their minds just then, and I failed to arouse much interest.

On another point, I felt, I had a much better chance. I had not been tried. The Court which assumed to try me had dodged the central issue involved, and the Review Court, while it had not delivered its opinion yet, could not, I knew, state any body of literal belief to which the Church as a whole would be willing to commit itself. The delegates, I knew, would want to be fair, and they would want the Church to be fair with me. The bishops may have got themselves into a ridiculous position; but they had not yet made the Church ridiculous, and the delegates could yet save it. Here was my simple proposal.

The canons explicitly call for an Ultimate Court of Appeal in the trial of a bishop, and there was no such court in existence. The canons were vague as to how this court should be organized; but the Convention could see that it was organized, and that my case was presented to it, before any sentence was carried out. I asked the delegates if I might depend upon them to see that I was not denied this constitutional right.

For once, I was plainly disappointed. Not a single delegate replied to this request with any assurance that he would see fair play. I did not, of course, jump to the conclusion that they did not want me treated fairly. I think they believed it impossible, rather, that the Church could be unfair. If the Courts which had studied the case agreed unanimously, why should a delegate who had not thoroughly studied it assume to question their judgment?

And so the steam roller moved along. It never rolled over me. What it actually did roll over, when the Convention met in New Orleans, everybody must figure out for himself. It damaged me somewhat, as far as my civil and my property rights were concerned; but just what was actually flattened out is another story.

This matter of the non-existent Court of Appeal had been pressed by Mr. Sharts before the Court of Review. Bishop Leonard had ruled, however, that since my case would go to the House of Bishops, the House itself would "constitute a sufficient Court of Appeal."

This was quite satisfactory to me, if the House would consent to becoming such a Court. But it would mean, of course, that the whole House would have to sit upon the case; that my attorneys would be allowed to present every point to which exception had been taken in the lower courts; and the whole world would learn, to an extent which it had never been able to learn before, exactly what this "Dilemma of Orthodoxy" was.

Such a hearing looked good to me. In fact, it looked too good to be true. I should have preferred it even to the creation of another Court: only I had grave doubts that the House of Bishops, in spite of Bishop Leonard's words, would consent to enacting any such dramatic rôle. Therefore, I continued my plea for the creation of that Court of Appeals.

All will agree, I believe, that my position was unique. I was an Old Catholic Bishop and saying nothing about it. I was a Protestant Episcopal Bishop and saying everything about it. I was pleading that

I be retained in orders which I knew could not be taken away. I was the only one hundred per cent. heretic in the Church, and the only clergyman who could lay claim to being one hundred per cent. orthodox. Concededly, I believed all the creeds which I was convicted of not believing. Concededly, I did not believe them in the way a churchman was expected to believe them, but I could not induce the Church to say what that way was.

It was apparent to everybody that the Church's machinery was all set to get rid of me. Orthodoxy seemed to demand it. All the sacred traditions seemed to demand it. And yet no one was willing to commit the Church to orthodoxy, and my proposed deposition would be in direct violation of all the sacred traditions. Only I, the heretic, stood for complete orthodoxy, and my voice was the only voice which was being raised in behalf of Apostolic Succession. In the meantime, I was addressing great audiences of churchless workingmen, and being wildly cheered and applauded by infidels and atheists.

Was this because I attacked the Church? No, nothing like that. My speeches at the time were widely reported in the newspapers; and in all of them I urged the workers to support and to join the Church. I urged this especially upon the revolutionary workers, upon those who wished to overthrow the whole system of Mammon and unite all the creative human spirits of earth—one might say all the Children of the Creator—in one brotherhood of human service.

I urged it upon the so-called infidels and atheists. I urged them to drop their cynicism and to believe. Not, to be sure, to swallow a whole lot of folk-lore literally, for that would not only be futile but im-

possible, but to see the great, human truths of which these stories were poetic symbols.

I did my best to hold up Christ before these workers: not any theological Christ, but the crucified Son of Man—crucified by bigotry, crucified by privilege, crucified by the blindness of a world and a Church which does not yet dare to face the realities of human life.

These poverty-stricken workers, I found, responded to such preaching. They *believed;* and while their halls provided no physical facilities for baptism, I should have been quite willing to baptize them then and there. It was, and still is, my ambition to take some of these congregations into the Church. They will yet come, I am sure; and when they do come, the Church will have a spiritual awakening such as it has not known in centuries.

Under the circumstances, then, it did not discourage me when the officially accredited delegates to the Protestant Episcopal Convention did not rise to save the Church from the predicament into which the attempt to try me was getting it. I made my preparations to go to New Orleans, somewhat ahead of the Convention which was to open on October 7.

Archbishop Francis also prepared to go, and I arranged to have my lawyers with me, in case the House of Bishops did decide to give my case a hearing, in lieu of a court of appeal, as Bishop Leonard had suggested.

Professor Schroeder was also asked to come along. He told me that he could not see why he should, as he was probably less of an Episcopalian than any one else either of us could call to mind. But I wanted him. I thought he might come in handy,

and he did. Moreover, I felt like having a party; and I secured reservations in advance for seventeen of us at the St. Charles Hotel.

Being tried for heresy, you must remember, is not anything like the ordeal which it used to be. Mine was a heresy case *de luxe,* throughout; and I de luxed it even more than usual at New Orleans.

For that matter, every Episcopalian Convention is likely to be a pretty vulgar display of wealth. The followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, in New Orleans, had wonderful places to lay their heads. And the bishops, especially, the true successors to the persecuted Galilean fishermen, reveled in all the luxuries of the best hotels.

I do not mean this as a criticism, for I did the same thing myself: I am simply trying to keep the record straight. An Episcopal Convention is nothing at all like a working-class gathering. It has none of its squalor, none of its desperation and none of its religious fervor. Everything seems to be expensive, proper and polite.

I do not want any one to think that I footed the bills for that whole party of seventeen. The St. Charles' management may have thought I did, and the seventeen may even have been under the same impression; but actually, it was not I but the churchless, godless working class of America—the very same people who paid, in the last analysis, for the whole expensive Convention.

The earth, as every Christian knows, is the Lord's. But the Lord, according to the laws, is incompetent to exercise ownership, and so the actual title to it is in other hands. It is in the hands, mostly, of those who have grabbed it, and the heirs and assigns of

those who grabbed it when grabbing was especially good.

I had never grabbed any myself. I was just an heir and assign. But the Scrantons had once taken title to some farm lands in Cleveland, or they had taken title to some farm lands, rather, and the city of Cleveland grew up around them. Eventually, those lands became most valuable. It is possible that the Scrantons had a little something to do with adding to the value of those lands. But their heirs and assigns did not. I am certain, at least, that I did not. All I ever did was to own, and to keep on owning, the few parcels which came my way.

There was a time in my life when I had used some land for all that I was worth. I cleared it and plowed it and harrowed it and planted it, and I hoed it and weeded it and nearly killed myself trying to make that land more valuable; but I never got anything out of it except a bite to eat and such desperate poverty that the community could not bear to look at me and decided to take me to the Poor House instead.

But owning land, instead of using it, was an altogether different thing. As owner, I got none of the knocks and all of the rewards. The people who really created the wealth, you see, kept on living in poverty, just as I had done before I became an heir and assign. They surely created plenty of new wealth, but they did not put it into their own pockets: they put it into *my* land, so that I would not have anything to worry about.

Just before this New Orleans Convention, plans were matured in Cleveland for the building of the long-delayed and much-needed Union Station; and

in order to build it, it was found, it would be necessary to take, among other pieces of property, a little remnant of real estate—a little two-by-twice patch too ridiculously small to think of putting a commercial building on—which, according to the records, belonged to William M. and Ella B. Brown. Said Browns had never turned over their hands to make that land worth anything, but they had faithfully owned it all these years; therefore it was decreed that they should be given $80,000 of the wealth which American workers had created in the process of producing the city of Cleveland. Under the circumstances, do you wonder that I felt like having a party?

XX

THE REVIEW COURT COMMUNICATES AN OPINION WHICH EXCOMMUNICATES EVERYBODY

While I was making my preparations to go to New Orleans, I received the long-awaited written opinion of the Review Court. I opened it eagerly; for I had been arguing all summer against their ruling, without any knowledge of what their real position was.

How would they assume to define heresy? From what other sources than Mar Timotheus had they received ecclesiastical light? Mar Timotheus, after all, was not an accredited arbiter: he was just one scholar whose opinion had been decidedly unfavorable to their position. Others had doubtless been found who would take a different stand, and some principle which I had not hitherto been able to think of might now be invoked to sustain my conviction.

The Opinion seemed exasperatingly deliberate. It took up one technical point after another—deciding them all against me, of course; but that was to be expected. I was impatient to get down to the meat of the thing—the question of *how* the Creeds must be interpreted. Must they be interpreted literally; or may they be interpreted, in part or as a whole, symbolically? No other issue than that had ever really mattered.

Ah, here it was at last. That is, it seemed to be. It was the eighteenth page. Three questions raised by the defense were listed, and the judicial answers were about to be delivered.

1. Has the Protestant Episcopal Church a standard of doctrine?
2. What is the doctrine and where is it to be found?
3. What was the doctrine held and taught advisedly by the accused, that is contrary to that held and taught by this Church?

I could hardly wait to read the answers. They also were marked—No. 1, 2, 3, with parenthetical a's and b's under each figure in orderly legal array. It all seemed too good to be true. And it was. Let me, for instance, quote the answer to Question No. 1.

(1) The answer to the first query is found—

(a) In the declaration which is required by Article VIII of the Constitution to be subscribed and made by every one ordered Deacon or Priest, ordained and consecrated Bishop: "I do believe the Holy Scriptures to be the Word of God . . . and do solemnly engage to conform to the Doctrine . . . of the Protestant Episcopal Church," etc.

(b) Also in Canon 28: Of Offenses for which Bishops, Priests, or Deacons May be Tried, where we read: "Holding and teaching publicly or privately, and advisedly, any doctrine contrary to that held by this Church."

(c) Also in the Preface to the Prayer Book where it is stated that "this Church is far from intending to depart from the Church of England in any essential point of doctrine."

These three statements, occurring in the Constitution,

in all the Dioceses and Missionary Districts of the Church." Canon 11 shows the value the Church places upon the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, as containing "the historic faith of the Church." In the Preface to the Prayer Book, as noted above, it is stated that upon a comparison of the Book of Common Prayer adopted by this Church with the Prayer Book of the Church of England it will appear that "this Church is far from intending to depart from the Church of England in any essential point of doctrine." This implies that the Prayer Book, which orders the use of the Apostles' Creed in the services for Baptism, Confirmation, Visitations of the Sick and of Prisoners, and which requires furthermore that in Morning and Evening Prayer and in the office of Holy Communion, it or the Nicene Creed be used (on certain specified days the use of the Nicene Creed is obligatory), does contain the doctrine of the Church, and that in so far as the doctrine is therein set forth, it must be accepted as containing the articles of faith or doctrine that must be accepted by all members of the Church.

Think of it! All those words strung together, after eight months' work, and not one of them distantly bearing upon the case of William Montgomery Brown. I had no quarrel with the Prayer Book. I was using it daily, and it was more precious to me now than it had ever been before. That I believed it was seemingly not doubted, for no one had insinuated that I was lying when I said so. But I had also believed and taught some other things too. They did not conflict with the Doctrine of the Church, for that had vanished. They did not conflict with *my* interpretation of the Prayer Book. Undoubtedly they did conflict, however, with Bishop

Leonard's interpretation of it; and if he and his colleagues wished to set forth their interpretation as the Doctrine of the Church, and the Church could be persuaded to ratify their act, that would clear everything up and there would be no more to be said for me.

But that is exactly what they did not do. I have no doubt that they tried, and I have no doubt that they thought they could do it when they first promised that written opinion. But in spite of themselves, they were more or less living in the year 1925; and in that year, the Prayer Book had no meaning at all for anybody who tried to take it literally. They discovered, I believe, that they too had to take it symbolically. They too had to interpret it, just as I had done, according to the understanding which they possessed and which was not possessed by the original formulators of those Creeds.

But they did not have the nerve, I say it to their credit, to attempt to foist their individual interpretations of those Creeds upon the Church as a whole, as doctrine from which no minister could hereafter vary. They did have the nerve, however, to find me guilty for doing what they must have known every modern clergyman has to do. They had meant to explain themselves, but had discovered that they could not do so: then, instead of confessing their dilemma, they hid behind this mountain of words.

The whole written opinion completely ignored the very word "symbolical." One would jump at the conclusion, upon reading it, that the question of how the Creeds must be interpreted had never been raised. The Review Court's attitude, after all, was quite as crooked as the other. Not, again, because

it wanted to be crooked—for it could have been crooked in eight minutes, if it had wanted to be, instead of taking eight months about it—but because it could not confirm my conviction and be straightforward too. The Church, apparently, had to choose between two evils; and the evil which it just could not brook at the time was the further presence in the ministry of Bishop William Montgomery Brown.

The answer to Question No. 3 was, in the light of what went before, utterly meaningless. What was the doctrine which I had taught which was contrary to that held and taught by the Church? The answer was words. First, the Court solemnly lined up the words from my book *Communism and Christianism,* and then set solemnly against them the now unexplained and admittedly unexplainable words of the Creeds. In witness whereof, the members of the Review Court thereunto signed their names.

William A. Leonard, Bishop of Ohio.
David Sessums, Bishop of Louisiana.
Chauncey B. Brewster, Bishop of Connecticut.
Wm. Walter Webb, Bishop of Milwaukee.
James DeWolf Perry, Jr., Bishop of Rhode Island.
David Lincoln Ferris, Bishop Coadjutor of Western New York.
Irving P. Johnson, Bishop of Colorado.
Wm. Cabell Brown, Bishop of Virginia.

Only on one condition, I could see, could any convention sanction any such report. That was on the condition that it was kept in the dark. Convention delegates are terribly busy. They have a multitude of movements which they are interested in, and

things that require a lot of study are referred to committees to report. None of the delegates, naturally, wanted to have heretics in the Church: that is, if they were too outlandish heretics. They had been too busy, apparently, to read my letters. My best chance of reaching them was to get the case into the newspapers again and to let everybody know that this official settlement had not settled anything.

The New Orleans papers at the time were practically given over to pre-Convention stories. Column after column recounted all the dramatic things with which this Convention would have to deal. For some reason or other, however, they never mentioned the case of Bishop Brown. My newspaper friend, Mr. Wood, dropped down to New Orleans to see what was going on.

"New Orleans is a most charming city [he wrote me] and its people are most courteous and gracious. It is to be the host, presently, of three thousand or more delegates to the Protestant Episcopal Convention; and its newspapers seem to have arranged with the steering committee of the Convention that only the most pleasant news shall be printed here.

"The reporters, of course, and the actual editors, are not in on this. They are excited about your case as the biggest news of the day. The *Item-Tribune,* in fact, and the *Times-Picayune* both asked me if I would give them an advance story; and I prepared one for each of them, simply summarizing what had happened to date, and stating the issue so that it could be understood. The boys thanked me heartily for doing them this good turn, and they thanked me especially for sticking to the news and not trying to editorialize in your favor.

"But the stories never came out. The boys wanted

to apologize to me, but I wouldn't let them. It is just a case of hard luck to be a newspaperman in New Orleans, if you happen to be interested in telling the news.

"I tried to get several halls here for you to speak in. The only one I could get was Labor Temple. The Convention Committee has options on the others; and although the Convention does not meet until Wednesday, and it was possible to get it Sunday for other purposes, the chairman refused absolutely when I told him I wanted it for you. I think you had better ask Bishop Sessums if you can speak in the Cathedral. Being one of your judges, he might hate to refuse. Why don't you let me release the big story? Even the New Orleans papers can scarcely refuse to publish that.

"*Later.* Saw the owner of the *Item-Tribune* to-day. He's a fine fellow. He is an Episcopalian and I understand that he may become a vestryman, but he is liberal and he told me that he did not want me to think him bigoted because he suppressed the news about you. He says that you may be a pioneer and only paying the penalty that pioneers have to pay; but the Episcopal Church, he emphasized, is the religious expression of *a certain kind of people,* and the people you stand for over in Russia are doing their best to kill off that kind. Nothing in advance then is going to appear in the *Item-Tribune.* That goes for the local radio station, too, which gets its news by arrangement with the *Item-Tribune.* I'm glad I'm not a press agent. I think I know news when I see it, but I don't know how to break through this New Orleans courtesy. The *States,* however, has printed something which I enclose."

I had no press-agent; but I needed none with such friends as Mr. Wood all over the country, apparently as interested in my case as I was myself.

I wired him and told him to release the "big story." That was the story of my consecration as an Old Catholic Bishop.

But this, also, proved not to be news in New Orleans. Or else it was not courteous, to the three thousand delegates who were beginning to arrive, to let them know anything about the predicament into which their Church was being rushed. The story, however, came out of New Orleans by wire and was made a front-page feature in Chicago and New York. Just what happened to New Orleans journalism I never learned, but a little later the Brown case was their big, front-page feature too.

I found myself in a strange rôle when I arrived in the city. I had no other special interest there than to let the Convention delegates know what was going on; but the Convention, through its steering committee, had all but tied up the town in order to keep itself from getting this information.

I had nothing to lose. The sentence hanging over me simply could not be carried out. That would be apparent at once to any one who knew the facts. Officialdom might, however, if the facts were kept out of sight, go through the motions of deposing me; then, if the details were only kept out of the newspapers, the public might gradually forget the incident (I suppose that was what was in their minds) and the ceremony of deposition would have all the moral effect, perhaps, of an actual trial, conviction and punishment.

It was up to me, then, to save the Convention, if I could, from a fraud which was being perpetrated upon it. To the delegates, however, I did not appear to be a savior. To them, I appeared to be a

nuisance. They believed in honesty and fair dealing, I know, but it was unthinkable to them that I could be the champion of any such causes. Honesty and fair dealing were virtues, were they not? And it is to the Church, not to an old, discredited heretic, that one must look for everything that is virtuous.

How I wished that might be true! That, in fact, was the end and aim of my whole campaign—to make it possible for the Church to become at least as honest as the world outside. If it could only do that, it would become the greatest force for good in modern life. That was the only thing, as I saw it, that was wrong with the Church. Under the circumstances, it could not be honest. Under the circumstances, it must be forever running away from the truth. Committed, as it was, to a position which would not bear questioning, it must sacrifice everything, even its own most precious ideals, to the business of suppressing questions.

Right here in New Orleans, it seemed to me, was the grand opportunity for the Church to free itself from the humbug which was throttling it. Right here it might declare its independence. Right here it might ally itself with the reality of Faith, through the discovery that True Belief can not be the outcome of cringing fear but is the beautiful fruit of Questioning and Doubt.

The scientist learns to believe a truth through doubting it from every angle. The theologian vainly tries to keep his "truths" intact by carefully guarding them against all doubts. The scientist therefore finds it possible to believe, and he finds it possible to act upon his beliefs. The theologian may be every bit as earnest as the scientist, and he may yearn as

sincerely to serve his fellow men. But he can not do it. He has no beliefs upon which one can act. He can act only upon his fears.

This was my chance, I felt, to get this message to the Church. I still think that I should have succeeded except for two things.

In the first place, the delegates were too busy. There was the momentous question before them of how a Presiding Bishop should be chosen. There were the Church finances to be considered. Then there was the Prayer Book to be revised—the Prayer Book which contained the unalterable doctrine of the Church, which I had been convicted of not believing in some particular way which no one was willing to describe. All one morning, it seemed, the Bishops debated about whether there should or should not be a comma in the place where the Revision Committee had recommended one. In every way, in fact, it was a busy Convention.

In the second place, New Orleans was too hot.

XXI

THE COMEDY OF NEW ORLEANS

One of the first things I did when I reached the city was to call up Bishop Sessums. In the first place, Episcopal courtesy demanded this; for I was still a bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in quite as good standing as he. He, to be sure, as a member of the Review Court, had recommended that the House of Bishops depose me, but we both knew that this was only a recommendation, and that I would remain in good standing unless the House did decide to ratify this action.

In the second place, the things I wanted to say chiefly concerned the Protestant Episcopal Church, and I was anxious to say them in one of our own churches. So I asked him, first, if he would permit me to speak in the Cathedral, at some hour when it was not otherwise occupied. I did not want a repetition, I told him, of the New York incident. If he could not permit me to speak in the Cathedral, I wanted his assurance that he would not interfere if I were to be invited to speak in another Church within his diocese.

"No," said Bishop Sessums, to both requests. He even asked me if I would forego the formality of calling upon him.

There was no hostility in this, I am sure. I think the man was just embarrassed. Although I was not an outsider, I felt, my Church had reached a sort of

an agreement to treat me as such. The bishops must all know, I reflected, that they can not depose me; but what they were up to I could not guess.

I had told the reporters, when I first arrived, that I expected to preach either in the Cathedral or some other Protestant Episcopal Church. Now, I had to take it all back. But the reporters did not say anything about it. I mean, the newspapers did not. The reporters told me afterwards that they had thought it quite a story, but for some reason or other it was not printed.

The Reverend J. B. H. Tegarden, however, heard about it, and invited me to preach instead in the Unitarian Church. I accepted. Mr. Tegarden announced the meeting, with large advertisements, in both the *Times-Picayune* and *Item-Tribune*. These advertisements were paid for in advance and accepted by the advertising agents. But they did not appear on Saturday morning. The notices had said that I would preach the same sermon which Bishop Sessums had refused to let me preach in any Protestant Episcopal Church in Louisiana.

The situation struck me as rather ludicrous. All that this Convention needed, apparently, to keep it from taking a step which would bring the Church into ridicule, was to know a little something of what was going on. My judges, I was sure, had they realized what they were doing, would never have allowed themselves to get into such a mess. But they had not realized it until too late. And now everything seemed to be set to keep the Convention from realizing it until too late. It was not personal animosity which was doing this: for the bishops all knew that I was a good soul in my own peculiar way. Neither was

it any willingness on their part to be unfair. Apparently, it was nothing but blind officialdom at work; and conspiring to work under cover because it could not work in the open and remain blind.

I was almost tempted at times to let the Convention go ahead and fall into the trap which was being set: let the bishops go through the motions of deposition, if they were determined to, and let the Opinion of the Review Court stand as the Protestant Episcopal Church's message to the world at large.

But I was too ardent an Episcopalian, I found, to permit myself to lie down on the job just then. I owed it to the Church, at least, to do all that I could; for, after all, I was the only one who could act in utter fearlessness—not because I was more honest by nature than any one else but because I had no "beliefs" tucked away anywhere which I considered too sacred to be questioned.

Had the Convention met in any other city than New Orleans, the ultimate result must have been very different. New Orleans is quite unlike any other American city. Psychologically, it seems to me, it is not intellectually curious, in the way that New York, Chicago and most of our northern cities are; nor is it fervidly Fundamentalist as are many of our southern communities. It is too hot a town, I think, to lend itself to heavy thinking; and it is grounded in a tradition and culture which does not go in strong for propaganda. It takes rather, in the winter months, to horse racing and the carnivals, and the rest of the year it is largely preoccupied with iced drinks and electric fans.

This is not said by way of criticism. It would be

a catastrophe, I think, if New Orleans should become a second Cleveland. There is too little variety in American life, and it is good to have some great community resist the American urge toward standardization. Nevertheless, New Orleans was the oddest place which Fate could ever have selected in which to take action on such a matter as was involved in my case.

Suppressing this news in New Orleans did not mean what it would have meant if northern papers had suppressed it. The papers were not betraying their readers; for the average reader, I am sure, was quite unconcerned. It was a little tough on the delegates, but the newspapers had no way of knowing that. As far as New Orleans was concerned, I was simply another comma in the Prayer Book, and it cared not one whit whether I was left in or deleted. It was, however, glad to have the Convention.

Still, the Unitarian Church was crowded. It was only a little church, however, and nobody was turned away. My meetings in the Labor Temple were attended by only a few hundred. I should have been greatly disappointed had I not been told that they were surprisingly large meetings for New Orleans.

As I think of it now, I wonder that those meetings were so large; for it was difficult for even me to care much about what was going on. It was October, but the thermometer registered in the eighties all night long. The "cold" water in the hotel was too warm to bathe in comfortably. One could not sleep unless the electric fan was pointed at the bed. If one thought about anything, he thought about the heat, or the expense; and the only apparent formula

to free one's mind from either consisted of not thinking about anything at all.

But the Convention went ahead with its routine work. It trimmed down the Ten Commandments. It put the commas where they seemed to look best. It received ever so many committee reports. The regular sessions, in spite of the heat, were all faithfully attended; but the outside meetings, the meetings arranged by special organizations within the Church to advance certain phases of religious work, were practically deserted. I know of one which had three prominent speakers and twice as many listeners.

In such an atmosphere, I felt sure, the House of Bishops would not resolve itself into a Court of Appeal to sit upon the case of Bishop Brown. But what it would do, I could not guess. It would have to act in some way on the report of the Review Court; but no one could get an inkling of what plans were on foot. The newspaper men, although their papers were not saying much about it, were all trying to learn.

Finally, they came and told me that they had the "low-down." They told me that they had it straight from Bishop Talbot, the Presiding Bishop, that I was not going to be given any hearing whatever; that the report of the Review Court would be presented and ratified by the House of Bishops, but that neither I nor my attorneys would be heard.

Strange to say, the newspapers themselves did not confirm this statement. The newspapers quoted Bishop Talbot as saying that the case would be given full consideration, and that I might rest assured that I would be given fair treatment. I could not under-

stand why the reporters had said what they did, but they told me later that the Bishop was quoted as he had asked to be quoted and that his other remarks were "strictly not for publication."

I was hardly prepared for this. I knew, of course, that Bishop Talbot would not tell a lie. Nevertheless, the farther the bishops went in the direction in which they had started, the more scared they seemed to become and the more they tried to keep everything concealed. It was more necessary than ever, I felt, that the Church be liberated from all such fears. These bishops, I knew, were good men. They were devoted men. They would risk anything, I was perfectly sure, to stand by what they believed was right. Nevertheless, they were getting so that I could not trust them. I attended the meetings of the House of Bishops after that in actual suspicion that they might take some action in my absence which they would not dare to take if I were there.

In the second week of the Convention, my case came up. A motion was made that the report of the Review Court be adopted. Of course I asked for a hearing first, and was given the floor, not for the purpose of discussing the case, but to explain why I felt that I was entitled to be heard.

But there was no hearing. The House would not grant me one hour, or one minute, to present my argument against the adoption of the Report. I was allowed, however, to ask for such a chance, and that was something. I spoke extemporaneously. I do not remember all that I said, but my heart was full. I had prepared an address, I told them, which would not take more than an hour to read. There was nothing bitter in it, for I felt no bitterness; but let

them hear it and they would not do this awful thing.

I had been brought to trial, I told them, but the issues of the trial had never been faced. It was not a question of my belief or lack of belief. They had all misunderstood. The Review Court had set out to clear up those misunderstandings, but they too had run away. Now, they had brought in a recommendation which, if it applied to me, applied to them all; and which they could not ratify, fully understanding what it was, and remain in the ministry themselves.

But I did not argue much. Mostly, I pleaded just to be given a chance to talk. I stumbled along for about ten minutes. Naturally, I broke down; and several of the bishops, I noticed, were equally affected.

Then there was a vote by roll-call on the ratification of the Report.

Ten bishops besides myself, I am glad to say, voted against my deposition. The vote was eighty-six to eleven, which was far more than the necessary two-thirds majority required for my deposition. But after all, there were eleven who had seen. A year before there had been only one—William Montgomery Brown.

My appearance, moreover, had had some effect in another way. Some of those who had voted against me, I knew, had been strangely stirred, and they were tearful and cordial in their greetings afterwards. Give them time, I knew, and they too would see. In another year or two, the Church at large would see. For it was not a complicated mystery to which I was trying to call attention, but a few simple truths

which needed only to be looked at squarely to be understood.

But here was a situation to be faced immediately. I could wait easily enough, I felt, for my vindication. My orders must still be recognized, meanwhile, even by these bishops, no matter what gesture of deposition they might make. But could the Church wait? Would not the Church be greatly embarrassed if it actually took this step? I reasoned that it would; and so I decided to go into Federal Court to ask for an injunction restraining the Presiding Bishop from deposing me.

That, for some reason or other, was considered news; and the papers carried my "threat" in streamers across the front page.

The next day, however, the dove of peace seemed to descend upon the whole battlefield. The bishops, I learned through the newspapers, were not going to depose me after all, but would keep the sentence of deposition suspended over my head, so that I might actually be deposed in case it was thought advisable at any time to execute the sentence.

This was not a formal resolution of the House. It was simply a bit of information vouchsafed to the newspapers by the official spokesmen of the bishops. Translating it into the American which I was rapidly learning now (having spoken nothing but Episcopalian during the previous years), I gathered that, if I were good, the Church would not spank me after all; but if I began to cut up, it surely would.

If I had been fighting to retain my personal prestige, this would not have struck me, perhaps, as a move toward peace. Under the circumstances, how-

ever, that was what it seemed. For it was a concession: not a particularly gracious one, perhaps, but a concession nevertheless; and it was the first concession of any sort which the bishops had made to date.

So I decided to meet concession with concession. I decided to go them one better. I even decided that I would promise to be good.

For this some of my good friends thought I was very weak. They said I was being unduly moved by the "crocodile tears" that had been shed over me in the House of Bishops. I had not been tried for being naughty, they pointed out: the charge against me had been heresy; and if I were to make any concession now, it would be equivalent to admitting that they had some foundation for the charge.

But I did not see it that way. All I could see was my House of Bishops actually budging, be it ever so slight a budge, from the blind determination to have done with me forever. Ten of them had indicated by their ballots that they did not favor deposing me at all, and several others had seemingly noticed that I was a human being and not merely a pile of something to be swept out.

Logically, of course, their concession was quite ridiculous. Heresy was either a most heinous crime, or it was nothing at all. The Church, to be sure, had long since quit burning folks at the stake for it: but that was because the State had stopped the practice. The Church, if its creeds were to be taken literally, still believed in burning heretics in hell. And yet my Church, which still stubbornly insisted that I was a heretic and nothing but, was still going to let me keep my seat in the House of Bishops, if I did not get to teasing those bishops too much.

But the facts of the situation interested me much more than this dry logic. And the fact seemed to be that I could remain unsentenced, under certain conditions. And in three years, I reflected, there would be another General Convention. It would not meet, in all probability, in such an inferno as New Orleans was just then. All the issues of my case would by that time have come into the Church's consciousness, and it would, of itself, undo the work which blindness and hysteria had done.

And I was well aware that I *had* teased the good bishops. *Communism and Christianism* might have passed unnoticed, if I had not adorned it with a picture of myself in full Episcopal robes. Also, when the bishops first thought of trying me and decided not to do so, I had decorated subsequent editions with a cartoon, which represented myself as a porcupine and my fellow-bishops as a group of dogs, who obviously wanted to bite me but could see no place to take hold without serious discomfort to themselves.

Now, that was not heresy, and the cartoon was not included in the presentment. But it was rather mischievous, from a certain point of view. It did not represent that side of my character which the bishops had glimpsed when I addressed them in the House. And now that the bishops were beginning to see the difference between mischievousness and heresy, I felt not only willing but anxious to forego all further pranks.

And so, when the reporters called to ascertain my next step, I disappointed them by saying that I would not carry the case into the civil courts. I would accept the olive branch, I told them, which the bishops

had extended; and I would give them no cause in the future to be offended by my conduct. I further promised that I would remove that offensive cartoon from subsequent editions of *Communism and Christianism,* along with the picture of myself in Protestant Episcopal regalia; and I would not appear in public thereafter, nor assume to write for publication, as a bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

That, I maintain, was a considerable concession. But conceding comes easy to me, when I once get started. I felt like conceding, and I looked around me for more things to concede. I was willing to concede anything, in fact, except that there was any such crime as heresy. If I could eventually get the Church to concede that there was no such crime, I felt that my life would not be wasted.

Taking back my "threat" to appeal to the civil courts did not seem so much. Going to court is no fun. My only thought in going was to save the Church from tying itself up in what I could see would be a disastrous tangle. The reporters, however, saw it from a different angle; and the papers which had sensationally announced that I would take my case to the courts, announced quite as sensationally now that I would not. The inference was that it had only been a bluff.

And the papers were scarcely on the street before I received a summons by messenger, from Presiding Bishop Talbot, ordering me to appear in St. Paul's Church at nine o'clock on the following Monday morning, to receive the sentence recommended by the Review Court and ratified by more than two-thirds of the House of Bishops.

Frankly, I did not like that. The bishops no doubt

had some reason for shifting around this way, and the reason was no doubt ethically satisfactory to them; but to me their conduct seemed almost ungracious. But there was nothing to do about it now, except to go to court. So Mr. Sharts and Mr. Bushnell applied to Federal Judge Burns for an injunction restraining Bishop Talbot and the House of Bishops from assuming to pronounce any such sentence.

The injunction was not granted, but the Court did issue an order commanding Bishop Talbot and the Church to appear the following Wednesday and show cause why such an injunction should not be issued.

Then I wrote to Presiding Bishop Talbot.

"My Dear Bishop," I said. "If, in defiance of the orders of the United States Court, you are still determined to pronounce that suggested sentence of deposition upon me, at St. Paul's Church next Monday morning, I take this opportunity to inform you that I shall not be there, as I shall not be a party to any proceeding which would tend to make the Church ridiculous. If, however, you demand a victim, my dear friend, Professor Theodore Schroeder has kindly volunteered to take my place; and I have authorized him to receive any punishment, in this world or the next, which bishops, in 1925, have it in their power to inflict."

XXII

PROVING THAT THE WORLD MOVES, EVEN WHEN ONE'S INDELIBLE ORDERS ARE ERASED

Just what followed nobody really knows. Bishop Talbot did preside at a weird ceremony in St. Paul's that Monday morning. I was not there. Professor Schroeder was. But the bishops either did not believe in substitutionary atonement or reached the decision that this was not the time and place to give an example of it. They did not punish Professor Schroeder at all. Bishop Talbot called out my name thrice; but getting no answer, he went ahead with the ceremony, which assumed to erase my indelible orders.

Then, on Wednesday morning Attorney George Zabriskie, of New York, with Former Attorney General George W. Wickersham, came into Federal Court to show cause why the Church should not be restrained from doing what it had just done. But there was a question of jurisdiction. There was a question as to whether our petition had sufficiently set forth the diverse citizenship of the parties we had hoped to enjoin, and rather than amend his petition, Mr. Sharts decided to let it be dismissed on this technicality, and it was dismissed without prejudice to us. In the spring of 1926 we began a similar action, not in the Federal Courts, but in the Supreme Court of the State of New York, where the Church maintains its official headquarters.

Obviously, this deposition was not a deposition. It was no more a deposition than my trial had been a trial. The bishops themselves, it seems, preferred to take this point of view. Bishop Irving Peake Johnson, of Colorado, one of the spokesmen officially chosen to deal with the press, gave out a statement in which he compared my case to that of a man who would not subscribe to the rules laid down by a club and was therefore expelled from the club.

This, to me, was strange churchmanship. In my most heretical moments I had never thought of the Church as a club. I had thought of it as a family, rather, from which one does not break all ties because his opinion on various questions comes to vary from that of his brethren.

On the other hand, if the Church were a club, no one would be expelled from it for heresy. He would either be charged, it would seem, with the violation of some specific rules or with general incompatibility. I had been charged with neither. As Mar Timotheus had intimated, they might have sustained a charge of insubordination; but I was actually in the position of a person charged with murder and convicted without a trial on the theory that a person with such table manners could not be a Republican.

Was I actually deposed in New Orleans? No ecclesiastical voice in the Church seemed to want to say so. Just what, then, did this ceremony mean? Why, it meant that I did not belong to a certain Episcopal club any longer. I still belonged to the Church, of course, for I was still an Episcopalian. And I was still a bishop; for even if the Anglican Church could erase its own indelible orders, it still recognized the orders of the Catholic Church every-

where. I was not only a bishop, in fact, but I was the only double-header bishop extant. Nevertheless, the Review Court had specifically recommended that I be "deposed from the sacred ministry," and there was some sort of ceremony in St. Paul's that Monday morning which assumed to carry that recommendation out.

Out of Russia, once more, came a puzzled inquiry. It was from a high dignitary of the Holy Orthodox Church, not a Bolshevik, who begged Archbishop Francis to explain to him just what had happened in New Orleans.

"It is all beyond my comprehension," the Archbishop wrote in reply. "I think it must have been the heat."

My own feelings in the matter were summarized in a statement which I gave to the press just before leaving New Orleans.

"Nothing whatever has happened to me," I said. "What has happened has happened to the Protestant Episcopal Church. . . . That Church has now committed itself to extreme fundamentalism. I do not think it intended to do so, but it is on the record. This is the first complete fundamentalist victory yet . . . the right to any symbolic interpretation of any clause of the Creeds has now been denied to Episcopalian clergymen. . . .

"That was the official action. Naturally, no Episcopalian can endorse it, and every effort is being made to hide it from the public. . . . 'Crawling' is the only word I know to characterize such an attitude. If the bishops only had the courage to stand by what they have done, the whole world could respect them. If they would come out openly for funda-

mentalism—for the standards which they employed, apparently, only to degrade me—then I would offer no criticism. But they have acted like whimpering children. I love them still, but they must mature considerably before they can command my respect.

"The Convention still has a chance to gain public respect, either by an open repudiation of the action of the House of Bishops, or by an open acceptance of the literal fundamentalist standard which the bishops applied to me but which they refuse to apply to themselves. As an Episcopalian, I shall continue to work for some such action."

But other things, I soon learned, were already beginning to happen within the Protestant Episcopal Church. The Convention took no action; but a great many of the delegates and attendants began to see some things which no Episcopalian, apparently, had been able to see three years before.

Soon after I returned to Galion, I came across two extraordinary references to my case in an issue of the *New York Times*. Both were in sermons by Episcopalian rectors, with whom I was not acquainted but who had watched the proceedings at New Orleans.

Doctor Robert Norwood, of the very fashionable St. Bartholomew's Church on Park Avenue, was quoted as saying:

"After all, whatever the personal traits of Bishop Brown or of any of the other Bishops, if the Church is the embodiment of the spirit of Christ as the Episcopal Church claims and as I am beginning to doubt, is not the whole trouble to be settled by what Christ himself would do? The Bishops may say that Bishop Brown denies that Christ ever lived. To this,

even if it were true, would not Christ just smile and say, 'Well, he will be agreeably surprised, then, when he sees me face to face. He has fed my sheep; he has cared for my lambs; he has brought my lost and humble ones into the fold. That is all I care about.' And he would say no word about orthodox theology."

Then there was the following, from a sermon by the Reverend Doctor John Armstrong Wade, at the Church of St. John the Evangelist:

"I was present at the deposition of Bishop Brown in New Orleans, and it was a sight to make the angels weep. The Christ of ecclesiasticism was there, but Jesus of Nazareth had neither part nor lot in the proceedings.

"The Presiding Bishop told us that he, as the Right Reverend So-and-So and Doctor of Divinity, deposed Bishop William Montgomery Brown. Not one word of regret or sorrow that that painful duty should be imposed upon him. Not one word of the magnificent work which Bishop Brown had done for God and man and the religion of Jesus. Cold, formal, stupid, deadly ecclesiasticism was supreme.

"It seemed a farce to hear the prayer, 'Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings,' when the whole proceeding had been cut and dried beforehand. The requisite number of witnesses were present, the legal advocate stood by in smug complacency, and I could not help but ask myself what Jesus of Nazareth would do with the erring one. I think I hear the Christ putting his great and only test for discipleship and apostleship: 'William Montgomery Brown, lovest thou me?' And I think I hear the saintly Brown reply with a full heart, 'Lord, thou who knowest all things knowest that I love thee.' And I hear the great, good Christ saying, not, 'I depose thee,' but, 'Feed my sheep.'

"All honor to the eleven bishops who voted against deposition. They had a vision of the Christ of the New Testament and not Him of ecclesiasticism.

"Let it not be for one moment supposed that I endorse Bishop Brown's book. It is a foolish production in the extreme—so foolish that I could not read it through. It was the result of unassimilated thinking with a lack of historic sense and background. I have no defense to make of the book. But in my judgment the Church of Jesus Christ, in which he has been for many years a zealous apostle, should have found some way to condemn the sin and save the sinner.

"The public at large knows little of Bishop Brown's wonderful work, nor of his saintly life, and if I were on my death-bed to-morrow, I would rather have Brown, so-called heretic, near me, than any of his accusers.

"Ecclesiasticism is a damnable thing, Ecclesiasticism is a thrice damnable thing. It is more damnable and inexcusable now than when it killed the Lord Christ."

Verily, things were happening and as a direct result, too, of the determination on the part of blind officialdom to remain blind. Had the bishops not acted as they did, had they been willing to let a little gleam of light enter here and there into the proceedings, the case against prejudice could never have been so clearly stated.

Naturally, I did not agree with Doctor Wade's views. I do not think I am a saint; and Doctor Wade's intimation to that effect was clearly the result of unassimilated thinking and the lack of historic sense and background. Neither could I agree with him in what he said about *Communism and Christianism*. But here, in actual demonstration, was

religious unity. Within the Protestant Episcopal Church itself, voices ten times more eloquent than mine were being raised, not in behalf of any formulated opinion about God nor in behalf of some vague attitude which could not be formulated, but in behalf of the universal search for Him.

This was much more important for the religious life of America than any mere agreement with my views could possibly have been. For *Communism and Christianism,* much as I admire the sterling intellectuality of its author and the irrefutable logic of the book, could not save America; while the attitude exhibited by Doctor Norwood and Doctor Wade can do exactly that.

America shall yet know the Truth, and the Truth will make her free. But she will never come to know it through endorsing anybody's thesis, even mine. She will learn it only by uniting in the search for it, not by quarreling over the conclusions which are formed along the way.

How glad I was, when I read these comments on the official outcome of my case, that I had had no followers within the Church. Had I written a book which a respectable minority could agree with at the time, it could never have focused attention upon the bigger issue. It would then have been a fight as to whether I was right or wrong, and, since churches do not like to split, it would probably have ended in a foolish compromise.

It is logically conceivable, in fact, that the Triennial General Convention might have endorsed *Communism and Christianism* and the bishops might have been called upon to peddle it, as they had once peddled *The Church for Americans.* It was a much

better book, unquestionably, than *The Church for Americans*. Its author was just as devoted and much more learned and mature: also, it was fresher; in fact there was nothing trite about it, and it said a number of things which no bishop had ever said before.

It was within the Convention's power, if it had wished to take the step, to include *Communism and Christianism* in future editions of the Prayer Book, which it had decided to revise anyway; but had any such motion been made in the House of Bishops, I should have been compelled to oppose it with all the powers at my command. The Church, as I see it, is not a place in which to endorse any specific theory about God, whether he is an objective reality or a subjective symbol: it is an institution, rather, in which to nourish and develop the religious impulse—that urge which exists in human nature impelling it to seek and attain a more abundant life.

The formation of opinions is a necessary by-product of that search. But the opinion is not the search; and no opinion which is ever developed can possibly be as sacred as the process through which it is developed. It is the search which is sacred. The Truth may always lie just beyond man's reach, but it is a constant liberator so long as the search is maintained.

But anything which puts an end to the search is death. The Church which attempts it necessarily cuts itself off from life. It may prosper materially for a time, through winning the favor of those who are in established positions which they are disinclined to give up, and to whom all social progress must therefore seem disaster. Such a Church may seem to be

powerful; but it is the power of Death, not of Life; the power of disintegration, not of religious unity.

I was elated, then, that Doctor Wade and Doctor Norwood did not endorse my views. It gave them an opportunity to raise the banner of religious unity as no mere partisans could have raised it. In our conclusions, they and I might be as far apart as the poles; but instead of separating us, this disparity of opinion only emphasized our one-ness.

And that, it seems to me—not the conviction, nor the Opinion of the Review Court, nor the silly ceremony of the bishops in New Orleans—was the *real* result of my being brought to trial for heresy. Not only in the Protestant Episcopal Church to-day, but in all the Churches, thousands of voices are being raised against dead ecclesiasticism and deadly dogmatism. Not for a mere revision of the Creeds. Not for a more modernistic statement of a supernaturalism which somehow must be insisted upon nevertheless; but for a recognition all around that religion is one and that mere differences of interpretation need not separate us from our fellow men. Not for mere Liberalism but for Liberation.

Let me emphasize once more what I said in the beginning of this narrative: that I did not achieve this glorious result. My part in it was rather passive than active. The man did not do much with the idea, but the idea did a lot of things with him.

XXIII

THE OLD CATHOLIC CHURCH AND MY NEW MINISTRY

I was a retired bishop when I was first brought to trial; but my episcopal orders were recognized only by my own Church and the Church of England. Now, after my "deposition," I was an active bishop again, with orders which were recognized, not only by the Anglican churches but by all the Catholic churches of Christendom.

To the general public, however, the old Catholic Church was but a name; and the whole question of the validity of orders was not a live issue anyway. It figured largely in the story, however, since my "deposition from the sacred ministry" was the one objective which my prosecutors and judges had set their hearts upon. Not once, even by inference, had they attacked my character or suggested that I had disgraced those orders in any other way than by the honest declaration of my honest views.

They could not conceive, I believe, when the action was first brought, that a Church *could* permit one of its bishops to hold such views. This was not strange, since nobody in America, apparently, inside the Church or out, had hitherto conceived it. No bishop ever *had* held such views before; and when even a layman found himself leaning in that direction, about the first thing that occurred to him was to get out of the Church.

But I had conceived it as quite possible that a

Church might permit anybody to find out anything he could, and still remain in the Church. And because of the publicity which had been given to this concept, any number of people were finding it equally conceivable. And now a Church—a recognized Catholic Church—had not only found it conceivable but desirable that I should be a bishop. To my prosecutors, this must have been too utterly astounding to think about, and so they did not think about it. Doubtless they heard the words when I gave them the information, but it was evident from their subsequent proceedings that they did not grasp them. They must have thought that there was a trick in it somewhere.

But there was no trick. In 1870, as they must have known, many bishops and clergymen of the Roman Catholic Church in Europe refused to accept the dogma which was then promulgated declaring that the Pope was infallible. They were not Protestants. They were Catholics. But it was their contention that the doctrine of the Church was unchangeable and that such a dogma constituted an addition to the doctrine.

They did not organize another Church, but they united to resist the change in doctrine which it seemed the hierarchy was attempting to foist upon them; and they continued in their refusal to subscribe to the amendment until the Pope declared them schismatic.

They in turn declared Rome schismatic, and they thereafter called themselves the Old Catholic Church, to distinguish themselves from the schismatic majority who, they said, were following after this *new* doctrine.

Their numbers were never large, and they claim only about half a million communicants in Europe to-day, mostly in Germany, Holland, Poland and Switzerland. In the course of time, there were large emigrations from these communities to America, and they brought their Old Catholic traditions with them. Many of these congregations, especially in Chicago, tried to function within the Protestant Episcopal Church; but the attempts were not very successful and, in 1914, the scattered representatives of the Old Catholic Church in America got together and elevated Bishop William H. Francis as Archbishop and ranking prelate of the Church in the United States.

All told, at the time of my admission to the Church, there were only about seventy thousand communicants in this country, and these in widely separated cities, notably Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, New Haven, and Newark.

This was a nucleus, to be sure, out of which a great ecclesiastical organization might eventually be built up. But was that what America needed—and was that what the Church of Christ most needed—another great ecclesiastical organization? Archbishop Francis did not think so. Naturally, he worked to build up the organization, but he had a far greater vision than that—the vision which had brought him, a Catholic ecclesiarch, to officiate at a Community Church in New York City where a notorious Protestant Episcopal heretic was scheduled to preach a sermon which the Bishop of New York had prohibited him from preaching within that diocese.

It should be explained, by the way, that the Old

Catholic Church, though loyal to the principle that the doctrine of the Church could not be changed, had no conscientious scruples against changing the discipline. It made several such changes. Among others, it permitted its priests to marry. Their forms and ceremonies, however, are identical with those of the Roman Catholic Church; and their clerical orders are recognized by Rome as valid.

This does not mean that the Roman Catholic Church recognizes that I am rightly a Catholic bishop. Its position, rather, is that I am wrongly a Catholic bishop, but a sure-enough Catholic bishop nevertheless. "Valid but not licit" is the legalistic term to express this distinction. The Old Catholic Church was in error, it claims, in refusing to submit to Rome: nevertheless, its bishops and priests were regularly ordained; and any acts of theirs, although they should not be committed, are valid acts.

Archbishop Francis, according to this judgment, should not have ordained me. Nevertheless, since he was in direct Apostolic Succession, he passed that succession on to me. If I were to join the Roman Catholic Church to-day, as I understand it, and were to submit to its authority in every way, I would not be reordained. I would be accepted, rather, as a bishop, without any further ordination.

I am afraid I can never become a Roman Catholic priest. This would be impossible, it seems to me, unless I were permitted to remain the husband of Mrs. Brown. But I can worship in Roman Catholic Churches, and worship with all my heart. I can and do subscribe to all its creeds; and as an Old Catholic, I do recognize the Pope as the Primate of all

Christendom. Not literally, of course. The Pope, to me, is a symbol of the Holy Human Father who, because the whole race shall have at last come together in one Catholic Faith, regardless of its myriad irreconcilable intellectual views, shall preside over the affairs of the United Church of the World. If the Roman Catholic Church would allow me to interpret the doctrine symbolically, I think I might even subscribe to the dogma of infallibility.

I should remain, of course, an Episcopalian and a Methodist; and I should still wish to become a Mohammedan and a Hindu and a Jew. For, Catholicism, as I see it, can not be realized through excluding anybody; it can only be realized through including them all.

I am perfectly aware as I write this that my words will seem inane to very many readers. But the same words would have seemed inane to everybody ten years ago; just as the theory of radio would have seemed inane to everybody a few years before that. Radio could not be argued. It could not be reasoned out. It had to be perceived, then demonstrated; and after that, there was no argument about it.

If all the so-called religions are not really one religion, then they are at war with each other; but if they are one, then any apparent war between them is simply due to our misunderstanding of the facts.

There has, assuredly, seemed to be such a war. The history of religion, in fact, has been a history of practically nothing but war. All the so-called religions, to be sure, worked to bring about religious unity, sometimes by killing off all non-conformists, sometimes by trying to convert them to the One True Theory; or, failing in either of those courses, by

making arrangements with their various gods to burn all unbelievers in hell.

If religion did consist of a theory about God, these courses were logical enough. All that could be said against them was that they did not work. The more they were tried, the less agreement there was. Rome tried the theory out on Protestants and created a Protestant Europe: whereupon the Protestants tried it out on each other and split up into a thousand sects.

The more devoutly a man believes in hell, the greater its possibilities appear to him. The hotter the fire, the more victims will it accommodate, and he surveys the field again and again for candidates. He may have intended the hell at first only for infidels; but presently the man who pretends to be a Christian and teaches a false theory of Christianity looms up as more dangerous than the infidel, and he makes the fires even hotter for him. But those who are nearly right in their theories loom up as more dangerous still, for they would deceive even the elect: so the hottest hells in all history, it appears, have been built to consume the folks who lived intellectually next door, whose theological variations from their persecutors was so slight that it is hard for the modern mind to discover what it was.

The Calvinistic hell was a hot one. It not only burned up all the heathen but almost all the Christians too. One not only had to believe exactly right in order to escape that hell, but he had to be mighty lucky in the bargain. And yet it did not work. It not only failed to make the world Calvinistic, but it failed to keep the Calvinists so. Some of them do

not believe in hell at all to-day, any more than my fellow bishops did; and to them, you remember, it seemed quite ridiculous to speak of my being punished at all. All that had happened, according to their way of looking at it, was that a partnership had been dissolved, or that I was no longer entitled to the privileges of their club.

This cessation of sectarian hatreds on earth, and this gradual cooling of the hells hereafter, could not have occurred, I maintain, if we had really had a lot of antagonistic religions. We only thought we had. What we had was a lot of antagonistic theories; but the religion underneath all those theories was the same. It was the same desire for a more abundant life. It was the same aspiration to rise above the commonplaces of existence, the same yearning to escape the handicaps under which the spirit was forever struggling, and the same effort to realize the potentialities of human nature.

I did not discover that all the religions *ought* to be one. I simply discovered that they were. It was only the theories about it which were antagonistic. That being the case, the problem was immensely simplified. We must either go on fighting over the theories or accept the fact of basic unity and let the theories take care of themselves. The theories that did not work would then die out; and everybody would be willing to let them die unless he thought of those theories as his religion. Those that did work would remain; and if they worked, the last thing that any one would need to worry about would be whether they were correct or not.

These were the speculations of a retired bishop. Presently they became the principles upon which an

active bishop was being challenged to act. That was something different. Ten years before, I had looked upon my life as finished. Five years before, I had just one statement to make before I died and I made it, I thought, in *Communism and Christianism*. One year before, however, I was challenging the Church to define heresy; and instead of dying, I found myself living in a more exciting world than I had ever known. And now, after all these stirring events, I discovered that my lifework lay just ahead. I am no nominal bishop, I find, who happened to be slipped some Apostolic Succession for the purpose of dismaying a perspiring Sanhedrim in New Orleans who had made up their minds to take my Apostolic Succession away; but I am a bishop of the Catholic Church—a bishop whose orders are recognized throughout all Christendom—actually commissioned, without any ecclesiastical or theological restraints, to bring about religious unity in these United States.

That is a big order, and I would shrink from it, except for that one discovery: the discovery that every human being is religious and that all of them have the same religion anyway. If that discovery can be demonstrated, not only religious unity but church unity will be realized.

How, I wondered, could it be demonstrated. And I decided, rightly or wrongly, that it could not be demonstrated through building up any one denomination—even the Old Catholic Church.

Such a Church might manufacture some very catchy slogans. It might broadcast its proclamations that religion is one; but if it were to call on all those who believe that religion is one to come, therefore,

and worship in the Old Catholic Church, the net result, as I see it, would be the establishment of but one more sect. It would be a fine sect. It would be an extremely liberal sect. But fineness and liberality are not universal in America, and it would not be a universal Church.

It could not even hope to corner all the fineness and liberality there is. Those qualities are apparent in all the Churches. They are also apparent in a good many people who can not be dragged into a Church to-day—not even into the Unitarian. And it would be a shame, I think, to rob all the Churches of their fineness and liberality, in order to build up one that was all fine and liberal, even if the thing could be done.

A more practical course, it has seemed to me, was to find out what keeps religious people apart; and I reached the conclusion, rightly or wrongly, that it was not their denominational affiliation. Their denominations did not create their misunderstandings; it was their misunderstandings, rather, which created their denominations.

The existence of classes, it seemed to me, had more to do with keeping human beings apart than any other influence. For these classes had something more substantial than a theory about God to separate them. Theories, in fact, were held very lightly. In theory, Christians might subscribe to the doctrine of loving one's enemies, while Jews might argue for Mosaic justice instead. But when war was declared, it might be discovered that the Jew was the real pacifist while the Christian enthusiastically girded on his armor to back up right with might.

If people had special privileges, however, they

could almost always be relied upon to act in accordance with them. They might believe theoretically that the earth is the Lord's, but they invariably acted as though their own title to it was somewhat more sacred than his. They might believe theoretically that we are all children of one Father, and equally entitled to a residence in Father's House; in that case, however, they always decided that Father lived in the sky, and if his homeless children on earth cast their covetous eyes on terrestrial living quarters instead, these proponents of universal brotherhood looked upon it as a wicked and fiendish revolution.

It was their class, not their theology, I noted, upon which people acted, as a general rule. It was their social and economic status, at least, which tended to make them interpret all their alleged religious beliefs in such a way that that status should not be disturbed.

Jesus, according to the New Testament drama of which he was the central figure, had noted much the same thing. It is easier for a camel, he said, to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to grasp the idea which he was trying to preach, and enter into the spirit of this organization of human life about the creative, instead of about the possessive, principle. Where their treasure was, he said, there would their hearts be also; and he pronounced his woes upon the rich, for no other reason, apparently, than that they were rich; and his blessings upon the poor, because, having no stake whatever in the kingdom of Mammon, they might be depended upon to inaugurate the Kingdom of the Creator in its place.

Only the propertyless, apparently, could really understand. Only the disinherited of Mammon. Only the servant, only the toiler, only those who were condemned in the very nature of their disinheritance, to lives of labor and drudgery and want.

And so I began my real ministry, at the age of seventy-one. I began it, not by trying to build up the ecclesiastical organization under whose auspices I had now been given world-wide recognition as a bishop of the Church of Christ, but by preaching in all humility to the working class.

I have not stepped down to fraternize with the workers. I have looked up to them, rather, as the Living Christ. I have abandoned the respectable, not in hatred but because I see. I have cast my lot with the disreputable, with the despised, with the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

I have not preached theology to them. I have never assumed to hint to them as to what Church they shall join. I have preached the Gospel of Revolution instead, the Gospel of the Kingdom of Service, the Gospel of the World for the Workers, the Gospel of the One-ness of the Human Family, the Gospel of actual peace and good-will in actual human relations, in place of a happy home in the sky which nobody, in the very nature of human life, can possibly know anything about.

I have not preached morals to them. An acquisitive society, I know, will have acquisitive morals; a possessive society will have possessive morals; only a creative society can be expected to develop the morals of the Creator.

And I have not taught unselfishness. I have not had the nerve. There may be many things which a

preacher of to-day may teach the American workers of to-day, but unselfishness is not one of them. Whatever I know about unselfishness, I am learning from these workers.

I have, however, in my humble way, urged these workers to come to Church. I do not stipulate what Church. I have urged them to get into all the churches and to take them over for their holy work. I know they can not accept the Church's folk-lore literally. I know they can not swallow anybody's theory on matters concerning which nobody has any facts. But they can and do believe in the Way, the Truth and the Life. Their faith is wonderful. Their religion is alive. They yearn for the more abundant life, and there is nothing to keep them from finding out how it may be achieved.

If they come into the churches, then, there will be one Church. It makes no difference what that Church is called. I do not care if they call it Catholic or Protestant, Seventh Day Adventist or Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian Baptist. It is not the word, but the reality behind the word, which counts; and whatever church the awakened workers of the world shall choose to worship in will be in fact, if not in name, the Holy Catholic Church.

XXIV

THOUGHTS ON GREATNESS, GANGS AND G. B. S.

I have been told many times that my story was most dramatic. If so, it has surely not been due to me. The times have been dramatic. A world revolution has been going on. Age-old institutions have been fading from view. Old concepts—so old and seemingly so fixed that we have considered them holy—have been sinking into the mist, and terrifying new vistas have been appearing before our eyes.

The Fundamentalists, whether religious, political or social, are naturally frantic. But it is not what the Modernists believe that is alarming these Fundamentalists. It is not what the scientists believe. It is not even what the younger generation believes. What terrifies the Fundamentalists in this cosmic upheaval is what they are beginning to believe themselves. Their universe is disappearing too. Their God is dropping from the sky: they are doing their desperate best to put him back, but the very firmament he sat on seems to have given way.

The play of these forces upon human thinking generally has made the past few years the most dramatic period in human history; and they have been playing in such a way that their action could be followed, upon the little stage which was set for the purpose of trying me for heresy. Only in that sense can my career be called dramatic. I was not an actor. I was acted upon. I did not take the center

of the stage. I *was* the center of the stage, and the actors acted upon me to the best of their ability. Whether the result was a comedy or a tragedy depended mostly upon what kind of seat the spectator happened to have.

In the spring of 1925, one of my friends wrote a letter about me to the world's foremost dramatist, Mr. George Bernard Shaw. I am somewhat vain, and I was naturally eager to hear what Mr. Shaw would have to say. It turned out, however, that I did not qualify as a Shavian hero.

"One can stand a bishop without brains," he wrote, "if he has character and believes in himself. And one can stand a bishop without character, if he has brains and understands his job. But when a bishop has neither brains nor character, he should, to keep a soft heart and a babbling tongue in order, become a Franciscan Friar, be good to the poor and have nothing more to do with bishops."

Now I thought that was interesting. It did not make an immediate hit with my vanity; for I thought at the time, and I still think, that I have both brains and character—of a sort. But Mr. Shaw had not mistaken me for a great man, and that was some comfort. Had I been a great man, in fact, I might have been obligated by my greatness to play some such rôle as he suggested: but being only a piece of the stage, I could stay just where I was.

Had I been a character like Phillips Brooks, this story could never have been told. Such a man, no matter what conclusions he might find himself arriving at, would never have written a book like *Communism and Christianism*. He would have been dexterous. He would have been plausible. And had he

been brought to trial for any stand he decided to take, he would have set up a great and formidable defense.

As a result, there would have been a great trial, but nothing much would have happened. It required some one who had no defense to show up orthodoxy for what it really is. I could not defend myself. Moreover, I could not get any one to defend me except Doctor Whatham, and I was not intellectually agile enough to quite follow his defense. All I could do was to spill the beans, and I spilled them all over the place.

Had I set out to solve the problem I could have accomplished little. But setting out to *be* the problem, a good deal was accomplished. Everybody learns much faster if he has an object lesson to work on; so I became an object lesson, and the Church worked on me for five years. At the end of that time, I think even Mr. Shaw will agree, it knew much more than it did when it began.

My job was strictly a job for a little chap. Under the circumstances, I did not even have to keep my soft heart and my babbling tongue in order. I had no following to placate and no big career to worry about, and I could let my heart have its way and my tongue babble all it liked.

As to whether I should have quit being a bishop, I can not say. All I know is that I did not quit. I just stuck where I was until I was deposed, and then I found that I was as much of a bishop as I ever had been and, in the eyes of most people, a good deal more. Not because I was a great man, however, but because I was not.

Were I a big man to-day I could, no doubt, in-

duce a number of big men to come into the Old Catholic Church. I might get the very best people in the community to join; but somehow, the prospect does not interest me.

If I had my choice, I would rather get the worst people into the Church: at least, those who are accounted worst. I would not exclude Bishop Manning, but I would much rather get "Mary" to come back. Nor would I urge her to quit prostituting herself and then to qualify, by correct living, to join our righteous circle. I would urge her rather to come in and worship with us; and let us help her, and let her help us, to find the way to a more abundant life.

I used to preach that man was conceived in sin; that human nature was just naturally evil and that only through the magic alchemy of the Blood of Jesus could such a rotten thing as a human being hope to acquire any decent traits. That was orthodoxy—but it was not faith. My heresies, I soon discovered, made faith possible; for they permitted me to believe in human life.

No longer did I have to suspect my fellow men. No longer did I have to separate them in my mind into groups of "good" and "bad." I could now see that all of them were human; and because they were human, they were inevitably trying to find the human way to live.

I used to think that human nature was selfish, but the term almost lost its meaning now. Of course we were all trying to realize life in our own consciousness, but if one tried to do it by living unto himself, he failed.

As a matter of fact, nobody seemed to be trying to do that. Men were butchering each other in war,

but not for themselves. They were doing it for their countries, for their flags, for their ideals. They were likewise killing each other on the streets, but not for themselves. The most notorious gun-men loyally and heroically sacrificed their lives for their gangs.

By nature, it seemed, man is communistic. He lives in his gang and by his gang and for his gang. The only Simon-pure individualists seemed to be the very young babies; but since it was quite natural that babies should be individualistic, everybody seemed perfectly satisfied. Individualism, in babies, was charming; it was only when grown-ups tried it that it seemed out of place. Grown-ups, because they are grown-ups, must express themselves in and through their gangs.

I had been expressing myself, ecclesiastically, in the Protestant Episcopal gang, and politically in the gang which I had called "My Country." These gangs had been fighting other gangs, referring to them, of course, as forces of evil. But one side, I now noticed, was no more selfish nor unselfish than the other.

To be sure, one side was invariably right and the other was all wrong; but the "right" side, in every case, was the side upon which one happened to find oneself fighting, so that distinction was not very illuminating. The point is, that as I now saw it, they were butchering each other, and damning each other, not because they were ugly, mean, bad, quarrelsome people but because they were loyal, brave, devoted, self-sacrificing souls.

There seemed to be some misunderstanding between them, that was all. The people did not need changing very much. If they were to discover that

they were all one gang, that would solve about every problem that was worrying them.

In the old days, of necessity I thought of the Church as exclusive. It was the place, naturally, for the good to congregate, on their way to that heaven which was eventually to separate them eternally from the bad. It was the institution, also, in which to have their human natures amputated, so that they might live, not human, but "godly" lives thereafter.

Presently, all this seemed to be a lot of bunk. If there was to be a Church, I now saw, it must be a human Church. It could not make men holy. It could be holy only if human life were holy and if it were functioning to express, not repress, human life. And if it were to help human beings get to heaven, the heaven must be located right here on the planet where human beings actually live; not in some imaginary place which no living person can possibly learn anything about.

On January 12, 1926, the Synod of the old Catholic Church met in New York City. We sent out an Encyclical Letter at the time to the various congregations, which was possibly the strangest document that had been issued by a conclave of Christian Bishops in many centuries. Whether it breathes the spirit of early Christianity or is simply the quintessence of modern heresy, does not seem to me to matter. I present it herewith, in full, not as an argument, but as a fact.

The Gospel of Jesus is universal in its application; and the Christian Church, if it is to be a Christian Church, must be catholic in character.

It must not ally itself with any favored group. It must not become a bulwark of established privileges.

It must not be a respecter of persons; and so long as the human family is disrupted by the existence of classes, it should be the first concern of the Christian Church, following in the footsteps of Him who was despised and rejected of men, to minister to the disowned and the disinherited.

To ignore the existence of classes in the world to-day is not true catholicism. To hint that it makes no difference whether one is rich or poor, and to promise mansions in the sky in return for such faithful servitude as will provide mansions for the favored few on earth, is to commit the Church to cowardice if not to downright fraud. It is to cry Peace when there is no peace, and to offer stones of theology to those who cry for physical and spiritual bread.

The brotherhood of man can not be so realized. To tell those who are counted out of human society that they must not notice it, or that Jesus loves them and that everything will be rectified beyond the grave, is to make a mockery of His life and teachings and to confess ourselves impotent for any practical purpose.

To bring the human family together again should be our aim, and to see that none of the least of these, our brethren, is counted out. Therefore, we conceive it to be the special mission of a Catholic Church to count them

in; not the wealthy, but the needy; not the righteous, but sinners; not those who are honored and applauded and upheld as model citizens, but those who are hated and hunted and imprisoned for the sins of the world.

The true Catholic Church can not be a Church of the classes. It must be a Church of the masses, of the uncultured "rabble." It must include every one through concentrating upon the inclusion, not of the exclusive, but of the excluded; and it must still be, as it was in the beginning, the Church of the underworld.

For there are classes in the world to-day, much as there were in the ancient Roman Empire, in an obscure province of which, and amongst its lowliest and most despised people, our version of the Christ story had its setting.

There is an Imperialism as ruthless as the Imperialism of Rome. There are aristocracies of wealth, aristocracies of race, and aristocracies of privilege who view the masses of the earth's inhabitants, especially those of African and Asian origin, not as brothers but as aliens and as foreigners whom it is their aristocratic privilege to exploit. In such a situation it should not be difficult to find the way of brotherhood and to evidence our kinship with the Negro and the Asiatic.

Even in favored America, there is an upper- and an underworld. Although the nation abounds in luxury such as no nation in human history ever knew before, great masses of the working people are still doomed, through unemployment and exploitation, to lives of poverty and insecurity and degradation. Crime and violence are therefore rampant. Prisons are overflowing and courts are working overtime, while murder stories in the newspapers furnish the populace with a daily spectacle of blood.

In this situation, Churches have given themselves to theological bickerings, and disputes concerning the interpretations of ancient documents the originals of which

have been lost for centuries; or, in spite of the fact that America has more laws and more lawlessness than any other great civilization on earth, they have devoted themselves to propaganda for still more laws, ranging from the proposed prohibition of the sale of peanuts on Sunday to the regulation of fashions in women's clothes.

Some of these Churches have burlesqued the religion of Jesus by supporting war, or by exalting the ideal of Native White Supremacy in the name of an Imperial Wizard and a masked and hooded Christ.

Generally, it is true, they have conceived it to be their duty to preach what they believe to be morality, and to separate themselves from all groups whose respectability is not duly attested; and they have generously offered to save sinners by inducing the sinners to become like themselves. But they have not fraternized with the underworld as Jesus did, and they have seemingly made little effort to understand its sufferings or its point of view. They have acquiesced in the dominance of property over human life, and have joined generally in the chorus of denunciation of all revolutionary mutterings.

When the proletariat of America, goaded beyond endurance, have dared to suggest a different social order in which the present inequalities shall not obtain, their leaders have been imprisoned, their literature confiscated and their meetings broken up by the police. Toward these outbreaks of tyranny the Churches have for the most part remained silent, where they have not openly acquiesced.

This is not the spirit of brotherhood. It is not the spirit of Jesus, and it is not the spirit through which the human family can be made to realize its one-ness.

We now, therefore, Bishops of the old Catholic Church in America, extend our greetings to the proletariat of the world. Humbly and with hearts that yearn to express our human kinship, we bow to the so-

called aliens, especially to the propertyless, the outcast and the dispossessed.

We greet the criminals of America; the convicts toward whom we, as a society, have dealt in anger, instead of in a spirit of fraternal love; the ex-convicts, hounded by the police and generally denied employment, instead of being reinstated and assisted, as they should have been, with every resource at our command; also the so-called murderers, thieves, gun-men, crooks, harlots and other men and women of the underworld, who may still be at large and following the arts of hate and fear because we, their brothers and sisters, have failed to warm their lives with the fires of fraternity and love.

We beg you, the so-called underworld, to forgive us. We have sinned against you. We have failed to recognize that you were our kin; and inasmuch as we have failed to recognize you, we have failed to recognize and have betrayed our Christ.

Let us come among you, we implore, and let us serve you. Let us be friends; and in the warmth of our human friendship, let us find our way together out of the hypocrisies and hatreds of life. Forgive us our jails as we forgive you your guns and blackjacks. Forgive us our capital punishment as we forgive you your murders. Let us find our way, in human brotherhood, out of the whole mess. In the meantime, refusing to pass judgment upon each other, may we not worship together?

And we greet the workers of America, especially the unskilled workers, the jobless workers and those who have, through the accident of race or other circumstance, been condemned to work in poverty at the most disagreeable tasks. Our sins against you have been grievous. You have been denied all opportunity for culture, and then you have been berated for your lack of it. You have been compelled to perform the most menial services, and then you have been despised for performing them. And we have promised you fraternity and equality

in another world, sometimes persuading you to believe the promise, while we have withheld every expression of fraternity and equality in this.

And to you, the revolutionary workers, we appeal as well. We have seen your sacrifices. We have not utterly failed to be impressed by your devotion to your fellow men. We are not wise in worldly wisdom. We feel unable to criticize your programs and your plans. But you have inspired us by your unselfishness, by your fearlessness, and by your determination at all cost to yourselves to reorganize society in a nobler and more human way.

Your comrades in prison, we feel, are our comrades; and the laws which are repressing you are oppressing all of us as well. With hatred toward none, we pledge ourselves to do what we can to put an end to all such tyrannies, and to use our influence to help set your comrades free.

Finally, to all the people of earth who are willing to recognize their kinship to all the people of the earth—Greeting. May we nevermore be divided by race or color or creed; and may we unite, as one brotherhood in one religion, regardless of how varied the expressions of that religion may be, regardless even of whether it have a Christian or a so-called "heathen" label, to hasten the full realization of human brotherhood, in a society without classes and without privileges, and in which not one of earth's children shall be classed as alien.

(Signed)

William Henry Francis,
Archbishop and Metropolitan.
William Montgomery Brown, Bishop.
Antonio Rodrigues, Bishop.
Albertus Jehan, Bishop.
Joseph Zielonko, Bishop.
Lionel Capers, Priest, Secretary of the Synod.

I introduced this letter which, after two or three verbal changes had been made, was accepted readily by all my fellow bishops. Apparently, it did not express my point of view any more than theirs. Bishop Zielonko's part in it, in fact, was much more significant than mine; for he had been attacked by hold-up men just a few days before and had been left unconscious in the street in Newark. Bishop Zielonko is not a great man, as the world still reckons greatness, and it did not occur to him that he was doing anything great in signing his name to this greeting of forgiveness and love to those who had so recently greeted him with violence. Greatness, in fact, in the light of the Revelation which was now breaking upon the earth, seemed to be of no importance whatever. Greatness, as a rule, seemed to spend itself in gang-leading or in the futile business of getting ahead of one's fellow man. Just to be human in these days seemed much better: for the dawn of human understanding had come.

XXV

ALL THINGS ARE BECOME NEW

In the spring of 1926, I brought suit in the Supreme Court of New York State against the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, in an effort to restrain the Church from depriving me of a seat in its House of Bishops or from interfering in any way with my Episcopal rights, privileges and perquisites within that organization.

It was my contention that the Church had no legal right to depose me, even though it were a mere voluntary association and unincorporated, until it had complied with the laws governing the trial of a bishop as laid down in its own constitution. Needless to say, I was not actually bringing suit against the Church. I was bringing suit, as I saw it, *for* the Church—to save it not only from an act of injustice but from a course which I felt must stultify its usefulness and which the rank and file of the Church's membership, when it had come to understand the real situation, would not want the Church to take.

Since the Church was not an incorporated body, this suit was brought against its treasurer, Mr. Skiddy, the gentleman who signed the checks which paid the expenses of my prosecution. To my surprise, Attorney George Zabriskie appeared for Mr. Skiddy and contended that he was not the treasurer of the Protestant Episcopal Church and that the Church,

in effect, had no physical existence which would permit its being sued.

Again, to my surprise, the court sustained Mr. Zabriskie in this contention, and my petition was set aside. I am writing this in 1926 and can not speculate as to what the ultimate outcome will be; but if this decision should stand, the comedy would seem to be complete.

I was brought to trial, it will be remembered, for heresy. But heresy, it appeared, was not a real crime, and so I could not be given a real trial. Heresy was only an imaginary crime, and so I was given an imaginary trial instead, ending at last in an imaginary deposition. This, as those who have read this narrative will recall, was utterly confusing to me.

I did not see how it could be done. I did not see how a real court could give a man an imaginary trial for an imaginary crime and achieve any results, either real or imaginable. But this decision may clear up the mystery. Under it, it appears that the Court was imaginary too, and that it received its authority only from an imaginary Church.

I am committed, of course, to a different view. I believe the Church is real, and that it has real work to do in a very real world. The fault of the Church, as I see it, is not that it is not real but that it does not accomplish real things because it is forever trying to function in an imaginary world.

The world has moved out of the age of tradition and authority into an age of science and realism. It had already moved out, although I had no inkling of the fact, years before I became Bishop of Arkansas. The Church, even then, was not figuring greatly in the actual life of the day. It could not deal with

life. It could deal only with death. If it had not been for its funerals and its supposed jurisdiction over an utterly imaginary life beyond the grave, it would have had no influence in the community at all.

It had no influence upon scientists. It did not inspire them in the search for more truth. It was jealous of science. It was antagonistic, usually, to the research which was going on. At best, it trailed along ungenerously, conceding in each generation that the findings of the generation before were not as sacrilegious as they had seemed to be.

This attitude did not much affect the world. At least, it did not keep back the age of science. Its chief result was to alienate the public from the Church and to spread the feeling that the Church's teachings were probably good for children but that grown-up men can not of course take them too seriously.

Under the leadership of such men as Robert G. Ingersoll, multitudes began to break openly with the Church. But this conscious break, as I see it, was nowhere near as significant as the unconscious drift: the subconscious recognition, on the part of the average person, that the Church no longer had a vital message for him. He might still go to Church, if there was nothing else to demand his attention, but it meant less and less in his life.

He was interested mostly in his job, and the Church had nothing to offer him in regard to that. A boy seeking employment might get a letter from his pastor, but more and more, as the years rolled on, such letters lost their value.

And when there were no jobs, the Church was still more helpless. The Church did not have the faintest idea as to why there were no jobs. The

Church, apparently, was not interested in such things. It was not concerned with the real problems of life; it was concerned with a life beyond the grave, which might or might not be, but which presented no pressing problem to a young man looking for work.

The labor union, to millions, became a much more vital institution. So did the business association or the club or the lodge. None of these things was opposed to the Church. But they dealt, or tried to deal, with life as they found it, and they more and more absorbed the attention of living people. The Church would not deal with life as it found it. It ignored the entrance of the new age. It paid no attention to it, and the new age paid less and less attention to the Church.

There is much to support this claim of its attorneys, then, that the Church is not, and perhaps has not been for fifty years, an objective reality at all. If so, however, it is high time that the Church should materialize, and relate itself to the only world with which any real relations can be set up.

For the world has undergone a revolution during the last half century. Old things have passed away: all things are become new. Orthodoxy is not the only phenomenon that has vanished in the great transition. All human relations have become different; and because of this change, the very commonest words in our human speech have come to have new meanings.

Take the words father and mother, for instance, the very first words which, in some form or other, every child learns to speak. Fifty years ago, the word father connoted a person who was the head

of a family. He was supposed to govern not only the children but the wife. It was written into the contract that she should obey him, and the word "obey" was not actually deleted from that contract, by the Protestant Episcopal Church, until the New Orleans Convention in 1925.

For nearly half a century, however, that word had lost its meaning. Few, even, of Episcopalian wives, had taken it literally. At the convention, in fact, the only arguments which were brought up on either side concerned the word and not the actuality of obedience; for it is doubtful if any of the delegates could so much as imagine his wife obeying him if he were to give some order which did not seem convincing to her.

But the word had a real meaning once. It was pivotal, in fact, in the very structure of society; and to suggest equality between man and wife would have been quite as shocking as to suggest banishing gods from the skies and capitalists from the earth.

For thousands of years, including the whole Christian era, the only social institution known was the family. For much of that time, there was no state, and when the state did come into existence, it was likely to be only a ruling family, assuming the same authority over the whole community that every father was supposed to have over his own wife and offspring. The head of the only institution there was was naturally held in reverence; and "Father" was not a word to be spoken lightly.

That a family could have two heads was unthinkable. No institution could exist if it were to go in two different directions at once. And the family, as a matter of fact, did cease to exist. We still have

the word, but the reality which for thousands of years was called the family, and about which all human life was organized, has passed out of existence. Likewise we still have the word "Father," but it has hardly a trace of its former meaning.

What we have in place of the home is hard, as yet, to tell. We still have a relationship which is called husband and wife, but what is evolving out of that relationship only events can tell. The subjection of woman, however, is past. She may still suffer from certain injustices; she may not as yet have achieved exact equality under the law; but she is now a person, every bit as much of a person as man can lay claim to being; and whether or not she may have promised to love, honor and obey, she has become mistress of herself to such an extent that the very suggestion that she obey a man has become ridiculous.

There are no fathers any longer, in the old meaning of the word. Also, no mothers. For the mother, in the old days, although subject to her lord, was the industrial executive of her times. She superintended the home; and it was in the home that the work of the whole world was done. It was there that the food was raised and prepared for the table. It was there that hides and grasses were gradually turned into wearing apparel. It was in the home that everything was made that was made, and in which the growing child was initiated into the ways by which human beings get their living.

But all that has passed. Almost nothing is made at home in these days. It is impossible, within the so-called home of to-day, to initiate a child into the mysteries of human living. The mother and the fa-

ther may tell it a lot of things; but there is very little that they can demonstrate. The home has been denuded of all the equipment which once made it so vital. A little cooking is still done within its walls, and much cleaning and dusting; but the home can not possibly have the influence it once had upon human life, because there are so few vital things that a child can do in it.

The modern child, to be sure, can have ever so many things done to it. It can have the speeches of the world, and the jazz music of the world, shot into it by radio; and it can step around the corner and see the statesmen of the world and the battle fleets of the world in actual motion on a screen. But this is not an incident of home life. It simply means that the great new world has battered down the walls of the home and is talking even to the babies in ways that no father and mother can possibly control.

All sorts of efforts are being made, to be sure, to cope with these new influences, but they are futile, pitiful efforts. The Old Guard of orthodoxy has gone in strong for censorship, in spite of the fact that censorship is not a particularly orthodox idea. If all the crime which the younger generation is committing to-day is due to Adam's fall, and if nothing but the Blood of Jesus can save us from it, it is rather inconsistent to pin one's faith to a political censor instead. But the orthodox are doing it. Through censorship, they hope, they can keep all ideas which conflict with St. Paul's from appearing in the magazines; and through legislation they hope to stop the schools from teaching anything that Moses did not know.

But they are having no success. They are getting

the censorship, but they are getting no results from it. Crime is increasing year by year. We now have eleven thousand murders in this country annually, mostly committed by youths who were born since this century began. No other country has such strict laws governing personal conduct as we have; and yet no other great civilization has anything like our record for crimes of violence.

The situation is surely desperate enough to warrant all the attention that is being paid to it. A mere optimist under such conditions is a mere fool. America can not go on like this. It must do something. My only complaint against the Old Guard is that the programs they propose are as dead as orthodoxy itself.

They unite, for instance, in scolding modern parents for not surrounding their children with the old-time home influences. But no modern parent can do that, for the simple reason that the old type of home has disappeared. They remember the days when the walls of the home did measurably separate a child from the community outside, but they have failed to note that those days have passed away. Those home walls have been perforated in a thousand ways. The work that used to be done in the home is now done outside, and the thinking that is done outside, in consequence, can not be kept outside.

There are a hundred newspapers and magazines to-day to one that existed in my childhood. This is a day of universal communication; and even if these publications were kept from a child, he would surely catch their echo everywhere. The telephone, the radio, even the billboards along the country roads, thunder the news that old things have passed away.

The country clergyman's daughter can not be kept from the knowledge that she is living in the days of silk stockings and cigarettes and lip-sticks; and boys of ten have become sophisticated as to the best method of cracking a safe and the correct measurements of a prize-winning bathing beauty.

There is a job in this new civilization, I believe, for the Church. But it must be a real Church, I contend, dealing with the realities which actually exist, not an imaginary Church dealing with unrealities. All my heresies can be summed up in that one conviction. For the Church of the past I have no criticism. If it shared the superstitions of the past, I do not blame it, for I do not see how it could have done otherwise. But the Church of the present must share the knowledge of the present: it can not function in this civilization with the superstitions born of a civilization that has passed away.

The world we are now living in is not individualistic. It is social. It is collective in its fundamental industrial structure and it is social in its psychological reactions. A gospel of individual salvation has long since ceased to appeal to it, no matter how individualistic its accepted philosophies may still be.

Men, women and children, regardless of their intentions in the matter, have gone out from the home and the old home influences and are relating themselves to each other in ways that the world never knew before. The greatest revolution in all history has occurred. The question is not whether we wanted to have one but what we shall do about it now that it has come.

Only with religion, I believe, can we weather it successfully; but we can not do that if we continue

to attach our religion to things that are not real. Certainly we can not do it if we continue to confuse religion with our notions about God and Christ and another world.

These people in this new world have all sorts of notions on such questions—these people with whom we all must live from now on, if we intend to remain alive—and there is not the slightest chance of converting them to any one notion. But they are all human beings. They are all religious. They are all longing for a more abundant social life and they are all making a tremendous effort to realize it.

There is a theory, I know, that some of them are bad. But it is only a theory. It has never been proved. And even if it were true, we would have to find out how to get along with them just the same.

We can not kill them off. That has been tried and it has never worked; besides, it only makes murderers out of us and we can not live abundantly while we are murdering our fellows.

Putting them in jail certainly does no good. That makes jailers out of all of us. Moreover, it does not segregate the prisoners. Putting them in jail does not put them outside our world—the world we have to live in. They still live in our community; and punishing them is like punishing one's eye for misbehaving, by sticking pins in it.

Coöperation is the only answer I know. It is the human answer; for all that there is of human life, to distinguish it from any other form, is its capacity to live beyond itself and in relation to other human lives. And it is the religious answer; for religion is nothing in the world except this human drive to escape from one's individual limitations into the

more abundant life. This drive is religious, no matter where it drives us. What we do with it, or what it does with us, will depend upon what we see.

I do not plead for a revolution, although I am a revolutionist, any more than the evolutionist pleads for evolution. All that the evolutionist pleads for is the recognition of an evolution which has actually been occurring; and all that I, as a revolutionist, plead for is the recognition of the revolution which has occurred. A great, all-inclusive, world-wide revolution has occurred during my lifetime. I was called a heretic for noticing it, but that did not stop its progress. The Church, if there is still to be a Church, must notice it. Man can not live unto himself, nor even unto his own family any longer, nor unto his own little sectarian group, nor to his own country and race; and no longer can he find his God within any such narrow limits. The attempt to do so only lands him in social and national and religious war.

I am not a leader, but I can see a Church which shall yet recognize this. I can see it springing, not from the eminent theologians nor from the accredited professors of righteousness as we now know it, but from the bleeding heart of the suffering Christ—the toilers, the outcast, the sinners, the lost. He who can not see Christ in the least of these, his brethren, can not see him at all.

No, I am not a leader. I am nothing but an old heretic. But I am not a heretic because of my unbelief. I am a heretic because I believe. I have seen this Christ. Him whom we have ignorantly been worshiping is now declared unto us. The Spirit of the Lord is upon him, for he hath anointed him to

preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent him to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised.

This day is this scripture fulfilled in our ears.

THE END

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